THE FANTE AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

REBECCA SHUMWAY

The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

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Rebecca Shumway

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For my dad, Wayne Perry Shumway

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Chronology

c. 1400 CE	The gold-producing area of modern Ghana entered into long-distance trade with the Western and Central Sudan.
1471	Portuguese traders reached Shama on the Gold Coast.
1637	Dutch forces took Elmina from the Portuguese.
1655	English forces took Jamaica, which thereafter became a major recipient of enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast.
1679	The Kingdom of Akwamu emerged as a political power in the Gold Coast. Wars erupted among coastal polities.
1687–94	The Komenda Wars took place.
1699	The Dutch West Indies Company (WIC) formed an alliance with the Asante Kingdom.
1701	Asante forces defeated the Kingdom of Denkyira, making Asante the most powerful inland kingdom in the Gold Coast region.
1708	Borbor Fante forces defeated the rulers of Asebu, Fetu, and Cabesterra.
1710	Borbor Fante military leaders achieved widespread recognition as the most powerful in the coastal region.
1720	Opoku Ware was enstooled as Asantehene. Borbor Fante forces won military victories in Fetu.
1724	With the defeat of Agona, the Borbor Fante eliminated the last of the sovereign rulers on the central Gold Coast.
1726	Asante forces invaded Asebu. Coastal elites organized a collective response to Asante's invasion of Asebu.
1728	Large-scale wars between coastal groups drew to an end.
1730	Akyem defeated Akwamu and became a major power in the eastern Gold Coast.
1742	Asante defeated Akyem and took control of Accra, gaining direct access to Atlantic trade on the eastern Gold Coast.

1744	Asante established formal ties with the Dutch West Indies Company at Elmina and posted a permanent ambassador at Elmina.
1747	Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee) became omanhen at Anomabo.
1750	The Coastal Coalition achieved maturity as a governing body for the coastal region.
1753	The British Company of Merchants began construction on Anomabo Fort.
1765	Coastal Coalition armies joined forces with Asante and defeated Akyem, then fought a war against Asante.
1770s	Asante forces conquered Dagomba, strengthening their power in the northern territories. Amonu Kuma became omanhen at Anomabo.
1806–7	Asante invaded the coast; sacked Abura, Mankessim, and Anomabo; and effectively destroyed the Coastal Coalition. The British Parliament passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.
1811	Asante forces made a second expedition into the coastal area.
1816	Asante forces made a third expedition into the coastal area.
1844	The Bond of 1844 established judicial authority for British officers on the Gold Coast.
1851	The shrine of Nananom Mpow was defamed by a Christian convert.
1868	The Fante Confederation produced the Fante Constitution.
1874	Britain declared colonial rule over the Gold Coast (and Lagos).

Introduction

On April 24, 1753, Thomas Melvil, the governor of the British settlements on the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana) sat in his third-story quarters atop Cape Coast Castle and composed a letter to the Committee of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, a London-based company and Melvil's employer. From the windows of his office, Melvil could gaze on the crashing Atlantic waters that sprayed against the cannons lining the castle walls, and on the tall ships that lay anchored a safe distance beyond the rocky shores. He could also peer down on the town of Cape Coast and adjacent African villages nestled among palm and coconut trees blowing in the sea breeze. To the west he could easily spot the whitewashed walls of Elmina Castle, African headquarters of the Dutch West Indies Company—Melvil's main competitor in the slave trade here.

On this day, Melvil's thoughts were on a town called Anomabo, just eight miles eastward along the shore, where the Company of Merchants was constructing what was to be the strongest and most heavily fortified slave-trading fort on the African coast. Due to numerous recent deaths among the European men working on the fort, the project was falling behind schedule, and Melvil struggled to explain to his peers in London how badly he needed additional men to oversee construction. The head engineer, a man named Apperley, was near death and, Melvil explained, the only replacement available was a man named Slater, who was totally useless for the job. "If [Apperley] dies," Melvil wrote,

> we are at a stand till another can be got from Europe, for Slater has so little command of himself that if I was to send him to Annamaboe I should expect that his Brains would be beat out in less than a week, for he would get drunk as soon as he could & then he would quarrel with every Negro which came in his way. He is a good workman and does very well to repair the forts, but is not fit to go where the Negros are Masters.[1]

This passage from Melvil's letter suggests much about the day-to-day operations of England's Company of Merchants Trading to Africa on the Gold Coast. Everywhere the Atlantic slave trade operated, it was a business steeped in alcohol and violence. What certainly is not typical of the Atlantic slave trade, however, is an Englishman referring to Africans—"Negros"—as "Masters."[2]

In the mid-eighteenth century, Great Britain was the world leader in the transatlantic slave trade. During the decade of the 1750s alone, more

than 250,000 shackled Africans were carried from Africa in the bellies of ships flying the British flag.[3] Those Africans who survived the Middle Passage arrived in the Western Hemisphere to find that the mere fact of being "black" sentenced them to forced labor for the rest of their (probably short) lives. On the American side of the Atlantic Ocean, the term "master" connoted European heritage. Africans were slaves.

How then could Melvil, an Englishman with extensive knowledge of the slave trade and by 1753 a resident for two years on the Gold Coast, identify the Africans of Anomabo as "masters?" Who were these Africans who had such a formidable reputation with the English governor of Cape Coast Castle?

This book is their story. It is the story of the population of coastal Ghana during the era of the slave trade, roughly 1700 to 1807. This story is about Africans who manipulated the circumstances of transatlantic trade to their own advantage, raising themselves to an elite status in southern Ghana, but it is also very much a story about African captives. Approximately one million enslaved Africans were sold from the Ghana coast into the transatlantic slave trade during the eighteenth century. Most were stripped of their freedom at the hands of African soldiers or raiders, and many were bought and sold by several African merchants before ultimately becoming the property of a European or European American slave ship captain.

Primarily a story about state formation and cultural change in West Africa, this book argues that the rapid and continuous growth of the transatlantic trade in slaves on Ghana's coast created a set of conditions within which the people of southern Ghana completely transformed their political structure and created the groundwork for a new cultural identity. They responded to the challenges of the era—including the rise of the Asante Kingdom—by exploiting the economic opportunities presented by the maritime trade on the coast and by creating a coalition that was flexible enough to withstand the unpredictable nature of trade and politics associated with the transatlantic slave trade. In addition, the experience of cooperating over several generations in defense of their common interests in sovereignty and trade laid the foundation among a diverse collection of coastal inhabitants for what would later be known as Fante (sometimes spelled "Fanti") culture by giving rise to a powerful war shrine, making Fante the principal language used on the coast, and infusing local communities with a distinctive military culture.[4]

Significance of the Study

Ghana receives a small but regular flow of international tourists who come to this West African nation primarily for a glimpse at history. Ghana is the land of Kwame Nkrumah and the Pan-Africanist movement of the 1960s. Famous African Americans from W. E. B. Du Bois to Maya Angelou have

lived here. Ghana is also home to Asante, one of Africa's most powerful nineteenth-century kingdoms, and kente cloth, a global symbol of African culture and power. Of particular interest to visitors from the Western Hemisphere, Africa's largest collection of forts and castles used during the transatlantic slave trade is here. Dotting Ghana's coastline every ten to fifteen miles, these looming structures (some of which now contain museums) offer a vivid reminder of the horrific trade that gave birth to the black population of the Americas. Visitors come to Ghana's castles to experience the physical environment—including sights, sounds, and smells—where many Americans' ancestors spent their last days on the African continent. Some come in search of a connection with their own African ancestors.

Considering the international interest in coastal Ghana's history, it is peculiar that the history of Ghana's coastal population during the era of the transatlantic slave trade remains largely unexplored by historians.[5] Visitors to the former slave castles are confronted with the hard fact that the people they see bustling around the castles—launching canoes, pulling nets in from the sea, buying and selling fish, drinking beer, and carrying on with a million aspects of daily life—are descendants of those who lived in the midst of the slave trade. Curious visitors may wonder, do these present-day inhabitants represent those who were spared the ravages of the slave trade? Or are they descended from Africans who conspired with European buyers and sold human beings into the Atlantic trade? The significance of these questions has become more evident in recent years as Ghanaians and members of the international community have raised the issue of reparations for the slave trade. Unfortunately, our inquiring visitors who want to learn more about the precolonial history of this coastal population and its ties to the repugnant activities of past centuries will be hard-pressed to find answers in the existing historical literature.

Apart from its connection with the Atlantic slave trade, Ghana has been the subject of thorough historical investigation compared to other African countries. The history of Ghanaian gold and its movement through both trans-Saharan and transatlantic commercial networks in precolonial times has been the subject of dozens of books and the cornerstone of numerous museum exhibits on African material culture.[6] Western audiences have been fascinated by the Asante Kingdom since the nineteenth century, when the gold-laden giant repeatedly defeated British forces on the battlefield.[7] Probably most of all, Ghana has attracted historical interest as one of the first African territories to be claimed by an imperialist European power (Great Britain declared the Gold Coast a colony in 1874) and as the first to develop a successful anti-colonial African nationalist movement.[8] The latter, of course, led to Ghana's independence from colonial rule in 1957 under one of the most famous Pan-Africanists of the twentieth century, Kwame Nkrumah.

What remains absent from this rich body of literature is a study of the roles of people living on the central part of the coast of Ghana (between Elmina

and Accra) in the transatlantic slave trade. It is quite possible to get the sense, from the existing historiography, that the principal historical themes in this part of Africa during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries were economic and political development stemming from the land's rich gold deposits, followed by European colonization and African nationalist and Pan-African movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[9] The fact that the coast of Ghana was among the main points of sale for enslaved Africans in the transatlantic slave trade has often been treated as a footnote in the larger narrative of Ghana's kingdoms of gold and Pan-Africanism.[10] John Kofi Fynn's key work, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, for example, vividly describes the rise of powerful, militarized states in southern Ghana in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but virtually ignores the fact that the source of wealth and military power behind these states was the capture of, and commerce in, human beings.[11] The most insightful analysis of the relationship between the Atlantic slave trade and changes in social and political life in southern Ghana to date is Ray Kea's *Settlements, Trade and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast*, a book that focuses primarily on an earlier period in the history of southern Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire but considers the transition into the era when the slave trade dominated coastal commerce.[12]

The most egregious oversight in the existing literature about southern Ghana in the era of the slave trade is the lack of attention to the town of Anomabo (sometimes spelled Anomabu).[13] Anomabo was the point of embarkation for more enslaved Africans than any other town on the Gold Coast, including Cape Coast and Elmina.[14] Anomabo was also the site of a huge fort that was constructed by the British Company of Merchants Trading to Africa in the 1750s—as mentioned earlier—exclusively to promote the British commerce in enslaved Africans at Anomabo.[15] Yet apart from the work of Margaret Priestley in the 1960s, David Henige in the 1970s, and the largely unpublished work of James Sanders, Anomabo has received hardly any attention from scholars.[16] Its towering trade fort goes virtually unnoticed by tourists and students—particularly compared to those at Cape Coast and Elmina.[17]

One important consequence of this gap in the historiography is the pervasive misconception among many historians of the Atlantic slave trade that the Asante Kingdom controlled the entire territory of the Gold Coast throughout the era of the slave trade, which is profoundly false.[18] The autonomy of the central Gold Coast, including Anomabo, throughout the eighteenth century was a defining feature of southern Ghana's history in the era of the slave trade, and it is one of the main topics of this book.

The enormous progress made in the past fifty years in quantitative and qualitative studies of the transatlantic slave trade shows without a doubt that slavery and the slave trade had an enormous impact on the history of Ghana and its people. Prior to 1700 the European trade on Ghana's coast

Figure I.1. Main entrance of Anomabo Fort. Photograph by author, 2009.

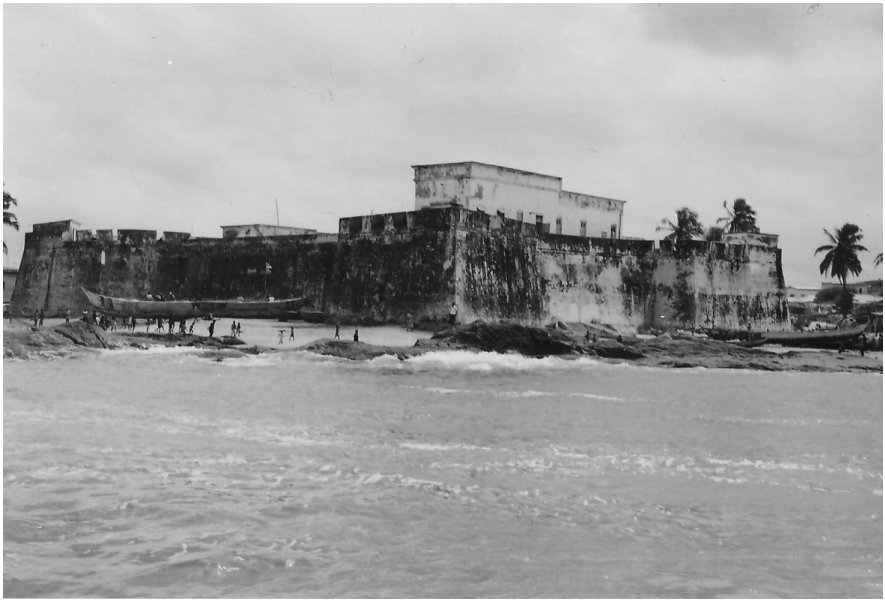


Figure I.2. View of Anomabo Fort from the sea. Photograph by author, 2001.

centered primarily on gold—indeed, the vast majority of forts and castles built for European trade were constructed in the seventeenth century to protect and facilitate European traders' purchase of African gold, not slaves. But between roughly 1700 and 1807, human captives were the most highly valued and heavily traded "commodity" in Ghana's busy Atlantic markets. Because of the strong British presence on Ghana's coast by the early 1800s, Britain's legal abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1807 took hold almost immediately here, even as other parts of the West African coast continued and sometimes increased the scale of their slave trade. This book addresses precisely the period when the Atlantic slave trade was a dominant feature of economic activity in coastal Ghana—from 1700 to 1807—and thus fills a critical void in the historiography.[19]

The need for a critical analysis of the history of the slave trade on Ghana's coast was highlighted, quite inadvertently, during a 2007 national celebration of three famous Ghanaians from Anomabo: George Ekem Ferguson, James E. Kwegyir Aggrey, and Nana King Amonu Kantamanto IV. These men, whose likenesses were immortalized in bronze statues at the ceremony in Anomabo, are among the most famous nineteenth- and early twentieth-century figures in Ghanaian history.[20] At the celebration, President John Kufuor called attention to the fact that all of these men came from Anomabo and noted that, to produce such leaders, the soil of Anomabo must contain something special that disposed its people to greatness.[21] By suggesting that the source of the celebrities' success is a mystery, the president's remarks reflect the widespread lack of information among Ghanaians about Anomabo's history as a center of international commerce in the eighteenth century, and of the broader lack of awareness of the important ties between the Central Region of modern Ghana and the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Perhaps if the remarkable history of Anomabo as a thriving international market during the eighteenth century were better understood, the large number of successful Ghanaian families who trace their roots to that town today would not seem so mysterious. Anomabo has been so central to the region's evolution that the Anomabo dialect of the Fante language is the one with the most linguistic "prestige" and is the version of Fante taught in schools in the Fante-speaking area of Ghana.[22] In the eighteenth century Anomabo was a place where the Africans were masters of transatlantic trade, and it should come as no surprise that the town produced notable African leaders in the nineteenth century.

African Social History and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

This study of political and cultural transformation in southern Ghana contributes to the larger scholarly investigation of changes across West and West Central Africa during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. Ghana

forms an essential part of Atlantic Africa—that part of the African continent heavily influenced by the growth of transatlantic commerce, migration, and cultural change in the early modern period.[23] Having moved well beyond the basic question of "What was the impact of the slave trade on Africa?" historians are currently engaged in research showing how African societies evolved during the era of the slave trade in a wide variety of ways that drew on complex local, regional, and transatlantic histories.[24] These works demonstrate the importance of innumerable adaptations that Africans made—ranging from residence patterns and farming techniques to politico-military organization—often to *survive* the slave trade, first and foremost, but also to diminish its negative impact in their local communities. As Sylviane Diouf has correctly noted in her book, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies*, the vast majority of people in West Africa were not involved in the slave trade either as captors or captives; rather, they experienced it as a set of conditions that called for various protective, defensive, or offensive strategies to preserve family and community life.[25] Africans adapted to the disruptive effects of the slave trade in Africa in a variety of ways that transformed the political and cultural layout of much of the continent.

The production of millions of human captives involved innumerable acts of violence across Africa. The operation of the slave trade within Africa—where white men could not go because of tropical diseases and sophisticated African military forces—occurred through a uniquely violent set of commercial practices. In southern Ghana, like elsewhere throughout Atlantic Africa, any given community was at times likely to engage in the capture of human victims and at other times to find themselves vulnerable to becoming captives. There were no clear lines between captors and victims. The traffic in human beings in Africa during the eighteenth century was driven by the principles of commerce, but it necessarily took an enormous toll in human lives due to the dangerous nature of many of the commodities involved—especially guns, gunpowder, and distilled alcohol. The slave trade within Africa was handled by well-armed elites who held a significant amount of both military and political power.[26]

From Senegal to Angola, African societies caught up in the transatlantic slave trade initiated political and cultural transformations of various kinds from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Historians have paid most attention to places in Atlantic Africa where large, militarized states emerged in conjunction with the expansion of the Atlantic trade on the coast. Numerous works have traced the rise and fall of states such as Kongo (Congo/Angola), Oyo (Nigeria), Asante (Ghana), and Dahomey (Benin).[27] These states were well known to European traders on the African coast, and their principal activities were therefore documented by contemporary observers. Moreover, the histories of centralized African polities bear a certain familiarity to those of kingdoms and states better known to historians and history

readers in the Western world because they were organized around a king and often engaged in territorial expansion. African politico-military leaders were fighting the slave trade in the aggressive sense, through expansionist wars in which prisoners of war and so-called tribute slaves fueled the kingdoms' economies. However, the majority of people in West and West Central Africa lived in *decentralized* or stateless societies in the eighteenth century. Their experiences during the era of the slave trade have received much less attention from historians, in part because they were less well known by Europeans trading on the African coast and in part because Western scholars struggle to understand and describe political systems that differ from centralized states and kingdoms.

The tendency to focus on centralized states to the neglect of other populations has been clearly exhibited in Ghana studies, where Asante has received far more attention than any other group, including the northern territories, the Ewe-speaking area, and the coast.[28] This Asante-centric trend is symptomatic of a "hinterland bias" present throughout much of West African historiography, reflecting a colonial-era notion that coastal areas were less "African" than inland states because of their long exposure to Europeans and European culture.[29] The emphasis in Ghanaian historiography on the emergence of Asante as the most significant event of that era has created a profound lack of historical understanding about how the Atlantic slave trade from the Gold Coast actually occurred. Most of the slaves accumulated by the Asante Kingdom through wars of expansion and tribute payments were sold to African brokers on the coast and not directly by Asante merchants to Europeans.[30] The intermediary, or "middleman," trade of the coastal population was an essential component of how the Atlantic slave trade operated on the Gold Coast. Moreover, Asante military incursions into the coastal territory in repeated attempts to secure direct access to the Atlantic trade at Anomabo and Cape Coast were the principal motive for the unification of coastal societies into a coalition during the eighteenth century. Ghanaian historiography must explore these interactions between Asante and Fante more fully if it is to provide a satisfying explanation of Ghana's place in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World.

Considered within a broader context of West and West Central African political and cultural developments in the era of the slave trade, the case of southern Ghana presents a unique set of responses to the shifting conditions of that era, while exhibiting many patterns of change similar to those taking place in other parts of Atlantic Africa. Like other coastal populations, the people living on or near the coast were enslaved in significant numbers during the initial decades of the transatlantic slave trade. From roughly 1690 to 1730 wars among small coastal polities produced a regular flow of captives who were sold into the transatlantic trade, as discussed in chapter 1. Similar events occurred in other African coastal regions, including the Senegambia

and the Slave Coast (modern-day Togo to Cameroon), where the slave trade took hold in the mid-seventeenth century, and Kongo/Angola, where the slave trade to Brazil developed even earlier.

Following a general pattern perceivable across Atlantic Africa, Ghana's coastal population gradually achieved a certain amount of political stability after 1730 due to the emergence of a militarized elite that regulated trade; consequently, the so-called slaving frontier (or catchment area for human victims of the Atlantic slave trade) moved farther inland over the course of the eighteenth century.[31] During the peak years of the slave trade on the Ghana coast—the 1770s and 1780s—a high percentage of persons sold to Atlantic slavers came from towns and villages many miles inland, perhaps as far away as what is today northern Ghana and Burkina Faso.[32] Once enslaved, these unfortunates were forced to march southward, changing owners at markets along the way, until they came into the hands of an African slave broker on the coast. During the height of the slave trade, then, the coastal area was mostly free of the large-scale wars and raids that characterized the early decades of the transatlantic slave trade. It was an area where human captives imported from distant lands were sold by African intermediaries, many of whom had friendly and long-established relationships with European and American merchants.

This secondary phase of adaptation to the slave trade—the period after 1730, when a degree of political stability had established a regularized trade—is the period in which the case of southern Ghana diverges in notable ways from other coastal societies in Atlantic Africa. Based on the similarities between the development of the Asante Kingdom and that of the neighboring Kingdoms of Dahomey and Oyo, one would expect the coast of Ghana to have fallen under the control of Asante by the mid- to late eighteenth century. Like Oyo and Dahomey, the Asante Kingdom grew vigorously in the hinterland of the Gulf of Guinea during the era of the Atlantic slave trade, importing large quantities of guns and gunpowder, as well as trade goods, and selling war captives and tribute slaves from conquered lands into the transatlantic trade.[33] The Asante army took control of the coastal town of Accra on the eastern Gold Coast in 1742 to gain direct access to Atlantic trade, and in 1744 the Asante kings established formal and enduring diplomatic ties with the Dutch West Indies Company at Elmina, on the central Gold Coast. The territory between Elmina and Accra, where the bulk of the Atlantic slave trade took place, however, was not seized by Asante forces until 1807, after the slave trade had begun a drastic decline on the Gold Coast. One of the principal questions this study seeks to answer, then, is how the central part of the Gold Coast remained free from Asante domination in the eighteenth century.[34]

A second question is how, in the absence of control by a centralized state, the coastal population constructed a cooperative network of political

and commercial authorities rather than fragment into competing bands. Coastal Ghana was not the only place in Africa where the Atlantic slave trade occurred on a large scale without political control of the African side of the trade by an African king. Most of the Atlantic trade on the coast and in the riverine outlets of Senegambia, the Bight of Biafra, and Angola was carried out by people who were not subject to the regulations of kings or centralized states.[35] But in those parts of Atlantic Africa, a distinct type of political transformation occurred whereby competing clans controlled the slave trade. The Aro people of southeastern Nigeria are perhaps the best example. They monopolized the slave trade in one of the most densely populated parts of Africa without forming a centralized state, instead negotiating alliances and promoting religious shrines as an alternative means of settling disputes and maintaining commercial control.[36] In parts of Atlantic Africa that did not fall under the control of a centralized state, the trend was toward political fragmentation and instability—conditions well suited for enslaving people.[37]

If the violence associated with the Atlantic slave trade tended overwhelmingly to produce either militarized expansionist kingdoms or fragmented clans in Africa, then, how is it that the people living in coastal Ghana steered another course?[38] The warfare of the early 1700s gave way to a period of political and commercial network building in southern Ghana, whereby political authorities, merchants, and spiritual leaders formed a coalition that encompassed numerous former polities—and thus engaged in a type of state formation—but remained distinctly decentralized, never coming under the rule of a king. Based on its similarities to other parts of Atlantic Africa, the coast of Ghana should have been decimated either by foreign conquest or fragmentation into competing bands. Instead, the various groups living in southern Ghana organized a coalition government under a new elite, defended their territory, and continued to carry out a relatively unregulated yet voluminous Atlantic trade.

The correlation between Fante political history and the Atlantic slave trade presented here contrasts sharply with earlier studies that emphasize the Akan ancestry of the population of southern Ghana and the commercial and diplomatic skills coastal inhabitants demonstrated in dealing with Asante and the Europeans on the coast, but not their roles in the slave trade. The vast majority of book-length studies of coastal Ghana have focused either on the era of the gold trade (fifteenth century to seventeenth century) or on the period after 1807, when Britain established colonial rule over the region.[39] This book highlights the eighteenth century as a crucial period in the development of what is known today as "Fanteland," a zone in southern Ghana with a distinctive language and culture. It emphasizes the importance in Fante history of the coastal peoples' defense against Asante and of their political unification in the eighteenth century. It also offers a new interpretation of Fante political history that is centered on the formation of a

coalition government, which I call the Coastal Coalition. This powerful and innovative political system enabled coastal groups to cope with the violence and devastation presented by the Atlantic slave trade—and the concurrent expansion of the Asante Kingdom—while capitalizing on the opportunities that the expansion of slave trading presented.

The formative role of eighteenth-century political changes in Fante history has been obscured by more recent historical events in which people in southern Ghana have identified themselves as members of a Fante "nation." For one, the British formed an alliance with political and military leaders in southern Ghana in the early nineteenth century, creating a notion (in the documentary record at least) of Fante unity that could not have been a political reality at that time. Between 1807 and 1816 Asante armies invaded the coast and eliminated the Coastal Coalition and plundered its main towns. The Asante conquest of Fanteland marked the end of self-government for the coastal population and gave Asante total dominance on the coast after decades of being shut out by the Coastal Coalition. Immediately following the Asante invasions (due to the passage of the Abolition Act in British Parliament), British policy on the Gold Coast shifted from pursuit of the slave trade to military aggression toward the Asante Kingdom and abolition of the slave trade.[40] In mounting their campaign against Asante, the British explicitly allied themselves with what remained of the coastal population, who they vaguely recognized as the "Fantees." Early in 1817 a British mission to Asante was launched from Cape Coast Castle, the result of which was a document stipulating an agreement between Great Britain and the Asante king (although the so-called treaty was never ratified). This document stated that the "Fantee territory," which was then a tributary to Asante, was placed "under *a sort of protectorate of the British*, it being stipulated that the [Asante] King should not engage in hostilities against [the Fantees] . . . without previous reference to the Governor of Cape Coast."[41]

The Anglo-Fante alliance that followed from this early nineteenth-century British policy, while appearing straightforward from the point of view of British agents seeking African allies against the mighty Asante Kingdom, belied the utterly fragmented political structure of the coastal communities in the wake of major military incursions into their territory. Many of the political authorities of the Coastal Coalition had been killed in the Asante invasions of 1807 and 1816. During Asante's conquest of the coast, the principal towns on the coast were razed and burned, and thousands of people had become refugees. The Fante leaders with whom the British built a partnership after 1816 represented an entirely new political structure that came into existence after the Coastal Coalition was destroyed. Yet the existence of a unified Fante "state" in the period after the Asante invasions has often been described as the result of a continuous process of state formation, which entirely ignores the rise and fall of the Coastal Coalition.[42]

Another instance of the creation of a Fante national identity was prompted by expanded British involvement in the political affairs of southern Ghana in the 1840s–60s. Members of the coastal elite who had survived the Asante invasions naturally responded to the opportunity to join forces with the British against Asante, whose command they deeply resented, and formed a coastal alliance to fight Asante under the command of British officer Sir Charles McCarthy. Fante elites thereby established a protocolonial relationship with the British as early as 1844. The so-called Bond of 1844, an agreement made between Governor George Maclean and "chiefs" representing the coastal area, stated that certain crimes committed on the Gold Coast would thereafter be tried jointly by British judicial authorities and local African authorities, marking the first step toward formal British authority.[43] In the context of this emerging protocolonial relationship, coastal African elites eventually established the Fante Confederation of 1868, a body that declared its members' eternal independence from British rule and asserted that the Fante people had their own national laws with which they intended to govern themselves.[44] It is this 1868 governing body—which existed only on paper—that has come to represent the cornerstone of Fante identity in the historiography of Ghana, obscuring the role of the confederation's eighteenth-century predecessor, the Coastal Coalition. Yet it is impossible to explain the preconditions that made the Fante Confederation possible in 1868 without acknowledging the unifying role of the Coastal Coalition a century earlier.

Because this study focuses on coastal Ghana in the eighteenth century, a time and place where African, European, and American histories intersect, it touches on an issue that has long been of concern to scholars of the Gold Coast and other parts of Africa. Since the 1960s many scholars have emphasized the importance of individuals, events, and processes of change *within Africa* in the evolution of Ghana's precolonial history as a rebuttal to the historical narratives, written during the period of European colonial rule in Africa, that overemphasize the importance of *external* European activities in shaping the African past.[45] Work on indigenous political systems, commercial patterns, and social transformations has provided much-needed interpretations of the roles of Africans in their own history and indeed has helped to establish African Studies as the scholarly field it is today. The notion of internal (African) and external (non-African) influences is not particularly useful in assessing historical subjects such as the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century, however, because it prohibits understanding how Africans, Europeans, Americans, and people of mixed ancestry all participated in reshaping the ways people lived in this part of Africa.

The Atlantic World paradigm, on which this study draws, is based on the idea that the histories of places and people heavily involved in the transatlantic flow of commerce, migration, and cultural exchange (during roughly

the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) can be understood only if events on both sides of the Atlantic are taken into account.[46] This approach has proven especially useful for broadening scholarly understanding of African cultural influences in the rapidly changing cultures of the Caribbean, Brazil, and other parts of the African diaspora in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[47] But it is equally useful for getting beyond the dichotomy of so-called internal and external influences on the coast of Africa in the era of the slave trade. For instance, in an intriguing 1979 article about Fanteland in the eighteenth century, James Sanders posed the question of whether the expansion of Fante influence on the coast was due to African or European factors—specifically, the rise of the Asante Kingdom in the interior, which threatened the sovereignty of the coast, or the military and financial assistance that the Fante received from the British, who wanted the central coast to remain independent of Asante rule.[48] Sanders reveals important aspects of both Asante-Fante and Anglo-Fante relations in this article but ultimately cannot provide a satisfying explanation of the causes of Fante "expansion" in the eighteenth century because he does not consider the ways in which the emergence of Asante *and* the growth of the British slave trade simultaneously created a set of conditions within which coastal people began to build new political, social, and cultural institutions of their own.

While taking an Atlantic World perspective may strike some readers as a partial return to a Eurocentric interpretation of African history, that is not my intent. I wish, rather, to reveal the ways in which local, regional, and transatlantic processes intersected on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century. As the subsequent chapters show, the transformations that took place in political and cultural life in southern Ghana during the era of the slave trade, for better and for worse, were driven primarily by Africans themselves.

New Cultures Created by the Atlantic Slave Trade

In spite of the pervasive violence associated with the slave trade in southern Ghana, a creative process unfolded there in the eighteenth century that is representative of the universal human ability to form cultures and communities under almost any circumstances. Alongside the brutality and suffering that made the Atlantic slave trade and the formation of the African diaspora possible ran a remarkable process of cultural adaptation and community formation. This process, as it played out in southern Ghana, forms an important layer of analysis in this book. Prior to 1700 the coastal area now typically known as Fanteland was divided into several autonomous polities and was home to people speaking at least three distinct languages: Guan, Etsi, and Akan.[49] The state known as "Fantyn" in seventeenth-century European accounts was one of these small polities, occupying about twelve miles

of the coastline. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, however, British documents described the entire central coast between Ahanta and Accra (roughly one hundred miles) as the "Fantee Territory." Perhaps more significantly, nineteenth-century observers noted that the people living throughout that territory spoke the Fante language, indicating widespread adoption of Fante among people identified as Etsi, Asebu, Fetu, Eguafo, and Agona populations during the eighteenth century. Clearly, then, over the course of the eighteenth century, when the Atlantic slave trade dominated coastal affairs, the linguistic and geopolitical foundation of Fante identity took hold within numerous communities on the Ghanaian coast that are the ancestors of today's Fante-speaking population. The era of the Atlantic slave trade was a time of both desperation and agency in Africa—a time of fighting but also of growth. In southern Ghana, the agency of African people took the form of building communities as well as commercial and political institutions. The outcome of this creative process was the emergence of an early form of contemporary Fante culture.

The idea that transatlantic trade altered societies and created new cultural forms is not new. It is commonly understood that many societies in the Western Hemisphere are products of the slave trade—especially in the Caribbean and Brazil but also in Spanish America and the United States. Recent scholarship has shown the importance of cultural change throughout the Western Hemisphere as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade.[50] Historians of Africa have lagged behind scholars studying slavery in the Americas in appreciating the psychological implications of living with the constant threat of violence. Of course, in the eighteenth century, cultural change in the Americas took different forms from cultural change in Africa. There is no comparable phenomenon to the transplantation of millions of Africans from Africa to the Americas. But other aspects of the experience of the slave trade, or participation in the making of the so-called Atlantic World, were similar in Africa and in the Americas. Slaveholding in Africa increased dramatically during the era of the transatlantic slave trade, introducing what has been termed a "slave mode of production" into many African societies for the first time.[51]

In some ways Africans living in the shadows of the slave-trading forts on the West African coast faced challenges similar to Africans living in American societies where people of African descent were bought and sold. As Walter Johnson has shown for the case of New Orleans, the presence of slave trading within a community has enormous repercussions for everyone living in that community, whether they personally enter into the slave trade during their lifetimes or not.[52] Migration of both enslaved and free people in Africa took place on an unprecedented scale as the internal slave trade grew alongside the transatlantic trade, bringing previously foreign African cultures into contact with one another and stimulating intercultural exchange and

intermarriage. Moreover, many African societies faced the constant threat of an outbreak of violence, as did Africans living in slave communities in the Americas during the eighteenth century, because of the inherently violent nature of slavery and slave trading. For many inhabitants of southern Ghana, personal freedom was constantly at risk, while many others lived all or part of their lives in slavery. Above all, the need for defense invoked dramatic changes in some of the most basic features of life, including spiritual belief, settlement patterns, and kinship ties. The creation of new spiritual practices, social relations, and political identities in southern Ghana during the eighteenth century has obvious parallels with similar processes taking place within the communities of Africans and people of African descent in the Americas.[53] Recent scholarship has begun to show specific correlations between cultural change in Africa and the Americas.[54] This book contributes to this growing body of scholarship on cultural change around the Atlantic basin in the era of the slave trade.

My discussion of the process of cultural creation in southern Ghana focuses on three eighteenth-century developments: adoption of the Fante language, observance of a central religious shrine, and formation of town militias. The people who refer to themselves as Fantes are an amalgamation of numerous cultural traditions. Primary among these are the Akan, Etsi, Asebu, Fetu, Eguafo, and Agona.[55] European settlers and their descendants also make up a small part of the Fante "melting pot." Since the fifteenth century, Fanteland has been shaped by waves of immigrants, including people from the inland rainforests of Ghana, traders and entrepreneurs from other parts of the West African coast and from Europe, and slaves from distant parts of West and West Central Africa. The name "Fante" itself refers to a group of immigrants who migrated southward toward the coast from the Akan hinterland prior to the fifteenth century.[56] In their festivals and oral traditions, communities that identify themselves as Fante today sustain a diversity of local histories and customs alongside a Fante identity. Some older individuals still speak the virtually extinct languages of their localities in addition to the Fante language.[57] But the vast majority of individuals inhabiting what is now the Central Region of Ghana identify themselves first and foremost as Fantes and speak Fante as their first language.[58]

The process by which the inhabitants of southern Ghana adopted Fante cultural identity cannot be easily explained, nor can its occurrence be easily assigned to a particular point in Ghana's history. Like all ethnic labels, Fante identity emerged out of a need to distinguish one group from another. It was neither an unchanging "tribal" name nor an entirely foreign label imposed by outsiders. It is clear from the historical record that the inhabitants of present-day Fanteland did not view themselves as a unified group prior to 1700. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the coastal communities waged fierce wars against each other and with their neighbors in

the immediate hinterland. Later, between 1730 and 1807, the Coastal Coalition and other institutions united the coastal population for their common defense and economic well-being, beginning a process of Fante identity formation across the coastal region. The first formal declaration of Fante statehood occurred in 1868, when the Fante Confederation (an entity with no acknowledged ties to the earlier Coastal Coalition) declared itself independent of British colonial rule. The existence of the earlier eighteenth-century Fante institutions can nevertheless be seen (though often only vaguely) in the records of the trading companies and governments of Great Britain and others who were negotiating treaties with individuals they understood to exercise control over the entire "Fantee nation."[59]

The widespread adoption of the Fante language and proto-Fante cultural institutions across much of coastal Ghana and its hinterland laid the foundation for dynamic social change among the Fante as a people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Roger Gocking has noted, "the relatively small and culturally heterogeneous coastal communities" of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were to have, "an importance in Ghanaian history far out of proportion to their actual size and populations. These initially tiny communities were to grow into the dominant societies around which the colonial order emerged. . . . In the twentieth century they grew dramatically in size to become the centers of political and economic power for what was then the Colony of the Gold Coast."[60] Because people who identified themselves as Fantes played such critical roles in Ghana's more recent history, it is important to better understand the process by which diverse coastal populations unified under a common Fante identity.

Of course, there are many elements of Fante history and culture that have little or nothing to do with the transatlantic slave trade per se. Most importantly, the clan (*abusua*) and lineage structures, which remain principal institutions within Fante social organization, far predate the slave trade.[61] Yet even these primary kinship structures appear to have been altered in significant ways as the diverse coastal groups formed new relationships of interdependency in the decades of warfare and instability that accompanied the Atlantic slave trade. As James Christensen observes, the Fante differ from other Akan in the degree to which they stress the patrilineal line of descent. The Fante *egyabosom* (father's deity) is given primacy over ancestral worship within the matrilineal clan. Fante also claim to inherit their blood from their fathers, not from the maternal abusua. And membership in a local *asafo* (literally "fighting men") company (which is determined by paternity, not by matrilineal descent) is the most important obligation to a Fante, to the extent that a man will join his asafo company in waging war against members of his own abusua.[62] To better understand the similarities and differences between the Fante and other groups with similar kinship structures and languages (most notably the Asante and other Akan), it is helpful to

briefly review the evolution of ethnic terminology in studies of southern Ghana's population.

Who Are the Akan?

Confounding the problem of a lack of historical scholarship on eighteenth-century Ghana, the history of the Fante-speaking population has been obscured by contradictions in the existing literature as to who and what constitute the Akan people and culture.[63] Akan languages are spoken more widely than any other language or language group in modern-day Ghana. Most Akan speakers identify themselves with one of several Akan clans. Each of the several clans has a particular totem or emblem, and these figure prominently in the regalia of chiefs in present-day Ghana. Because the clans are recognized over a wide area, including areas where Asante and Fante are the primary languages, all of the people who speak Akan can reasonably be said to have a common ancestral culture, of which Akan clans were a prominent feature. Unfortunately, the historical evolution of various Akan groups has too often been conflated in an unrealistic portrayal of the Akan as one people with shared traditions of government, social organization, and belief systems. This tendency to emphasize uniformity among the Akan-speaking groups of Ghana has made it difficult to understand the historical relationship between groups such as the Asante and Fante, who were fierce rivals in the era of the slave trade but have been conflated into one homogeneous group by scholars who treat them both as part of a single Akan society.[64] Before proceeding to an analysis of events of the eighteenth century, then, it is useful to explain the origins and evolution of the concept of Akan unity and to provide working definitions of the terms Akan and "Fante."[65]

The conflation of southern Ghana's history with Akan history can be traced through multiple phases of Ghanaian historiography, from early African scholarship in the nineteenth century to very recent works.[66] The concept of a single Akan identity has its roots in nineteenth-century texts written by African scholars such as John Mensah Sarbah and Joseph Casely-Hayford.[67] These scholars wrote at a time when British imperialism was taking away rights and authority from the traditional rulers of Ghana and disappointing the so-called African intelligentsia by excluding them, too, from most of the positions of authority in the new Gold Coast Colony.[68] Men like Sarbah and Casely-Hayford wrote tracts describing traditional forms of law and government as part of a conscious campaign to demonstrate the indigenous peoples' ability to self-govern and their inherent right to do so. It is not surprising that these African nationalists highlighted the Asante Kingdom as the prime example of strong and efficient indigenous government and emphasized the shared heritage of all Akan speakers in this tradition

of centralized government. Having recently experienced brutal defeat at the hands of the Asante armies—a situation few British military officers could previously have imagined—the British authorities on the coast had nothing less than a fascination with the sheer power of the Asante king. Africans calling for self-government in southern Ghana therefore made a strong case by arguing that the Akan people—including Fantes—had a long tradition of kingship and centralized rule, as demonstrated by Asante.[69]

For entirely different reasons, scholars in the service of the British colonial government reinforced the notion of Akan unity in the colonial period (1874–1957). As Roger Gocking has shown, the British policy of "indirect rule" favored the imposition of one form of native government over the entire colony, rather than many. The British chose the native government that appeared to them to have the clearest and strongest internal structure—that is, that of Asante—as opposed to the more decentralized forms of the Effutu (Afutu/Guan), Ga, Adangbe, and Ewe.[70] It was therefore convenient for British scholars to view all of the Akan as essentially the same, with Asante as the model for all, disregarding the diverse historical experiences among Akan-speaking people. From the point of view of the colonial administrator, the "pure" Akan culture existed in the Asante capital, Kumasi, while the coastal (Fante) areas typified a form of Akan culture that had been "socially and morally" diminished by a long European presence.[71]

In the 1950s and 1960s, while Africa was swept up in the excitement of independence, with Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah at the forefront of the movement, historical interpretations of the Ghanaian past took a new direction, while still reiterating some of the same views of earlier scholars. In the same vein as Sarbah and Casely-Hayford, scholars of the independence era glorified what was considered to be the inherent state-building tendencies of the Akan.[72] The grandeur of the Asante Kingdom was resurrected during the 1950s and 1960s as the hallmark of precolonial African traditions.[73] The growing disregard for differences among speakers of Akan languages was exacerbated in the 1960s by the official linguistic classification of the formerly distinct Asante and Fante languages as simply "Akan" by the government of Ghana.[74]

Ghanaian scholars incorporated the politics of independence in their interpretations of Ghana's precolonial history. Kwame Daaku framed two centuries of Ghanaian history around the rise of the Asante Kingdom, remarking that from its foundation in the late seventeenth century, "the history of the country became virtually the history of the relations of Asante with its neighbors."[75] In the spirit of crediting all of Ghana with a state-building tradition, Adu Boahen argued that all Akan shared not only a common language but also "virtually identical" customs, religious beliefs, and political institutions.[76] In the nationalist era, any aspect of precolonial history that resembled an idealized notion of statehood was taken as symptomatic of an inherent Akan spirit of state formation.[77]

This language carried over into the writings of John K. Fynn in the 1970s, and up to the present. Fynn portrayed the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a whole in terms of state building by the Akan. He argued that in the second half of the seventeenth century, "various Akan-speaking peoples were organized into a military union, aiming at political and economic expansion." It was, according to Fynn, "an era of . . . the consolidation and rise of states."[78] Ivor Wilks wrote, in a similar vein, that the Asanteman [Asante state] that formed at the turn of the seventeenth century exemplifies "the Akan state."[79] The 1960s notion of the Akan as a homogeneous group stretching from the Asante interior to the Atlantic coast has now become widely accepted, to the extent that scholars now refer to the "fifteenth-century Akan coast," disregarding the fact that what might be considered typical features of Akan culture came to the coastal area *after* the fifteenth century, through migration and trade between the coast and the interior.[80]

As African historiography in general and Ghanaian historiography in particular have deepened and expanded in the past few decades, the notion of a singular Akan identity has come up against a growing body of scholarship that reveals the very different historical experiences of various groups in southern Ghana in the precolonial period.[81] Nevertheless, the tendency to group the Akan together in anachronistic ways persists in some recent scholarship.[82] One result of the incompatibility of the old view with the new is the emergence of a new debate about the ethnic identity of some coastal groups who were long presumed to be non-Akans.[83] Scholars continue to postulate a single origin or ancestral culture of the Akan, usually taking for granted the idea that Akan itself is a known entity.[84]

Placing the dissemination of the Akan clan system and Akan language into southern Ghana in their historical context reveals important aspects of Ghanaian history that have been underappreciated. This study shows how the relationships among the various groups inhabiting southern Ghana changed over time and demonstrates the futility of the debate over the so-called origins of the Akan (which most likely will never be resolved). As recent anthropological studies have argued, ethnicity in Ghana must be seen in terms of the historical circumstances of its evolution.[85] Ethnic identity in Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, is neither an unchanging relic of the distant African past nor a recent colonial invention applied arbitrarily to a population. Ethnic identities such as Akan, Fante, and Asebu are manifestations of shared experiences among communities that evolved over time. Just as the term "Yoruba" and Yoruba identity are recognized as having changed and evolved over the past several centuries, so too should the term "Akan" and Akan identity.[86]

Moreover, the various identifiers used by past and present groups in southern Ghana need not be mutually exclusive. Just as Akan identity crosses the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire border without canceling out anyone's citizenship in

those two nations, so too can Fantes and Asantes consider themselves Akan without being any less Fante or Asante. Gold Coast writers, including Sarbah and Casely-Hayford, saw no contradiction between the widespread use of the Akan language in the Gold Coast Colony and the distinct histories of Fantes as opposed to Asantes, but over the course of the twentieth century the differences among Akan speakers have been deemphasized in favor of the narrative of Akan unity. As Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent have pointed out, these African scholars of the late nineteenth century understood the multilayered nature of ethnicity in Ghana long before most social scientists developed this kind of theoretical approach to the study of ethnic identity:

> Many of these writers [e.g., Carl Reindorf, John Mensah Sarbah, Joseph Casely-Hayford, J. C. De Graft Johnson and Dr. J. B. Danquah] pointed in two directions at once. On the one side, they were powerful spokesmen for the particular characteristics of specific Gold Coast peoples. A close reading of their texts might therefore be impressed by the points of divergence between them. But at the same time, their writings also pointed to the points of commonality between Gold Coast societies, especially amongst the Akan. . . . Sarbah (1968) and others often insisted that the Ashanti and the Fanti enjoyed common membership of an "Akan tribe." On the other hand, these same writers recognized that the intense rivalry between the subgroupings meant that there was no operative Akan community.[87]

Those in the service of the British colonial government also tended to emphasize the differences between Asante and Fante, even as they imposed one type of "native law" on the region as a whole. They saw the Asante Kingdom as an African military giant, whose armies had repeatedly defended against British invasion in the nineteenth century. The Fante, by comparison, were considered a weaker, less-organized distant cousin of Asante. The British tended to see the Fantes as "corrupted" by centuries of contact with the West.[88] Indeed, it would have been difficult to see the two as part of a single family in light of the enormous destruction they caused one another in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Immediately following Asante conquest of the coast, Governor Torrane wrote that, "they [the Asante] are a Nation of warriors constantly in arms and no way like the Fantees."[89]

The common use of clan names and language among coastal and inland populations of southern Ghana, then, should be seen as the result of the extensive trade and interaction between these two groups and not as a signifier of their similarities in political, religious, or social traditions. The Akan language was the primary language of the gold trade and was spread by the Akani trading caravans throughout the seventeenth century. Like other linguistic and cultural traits disseminated through trade, some aspects of Akani language and culture were adopted by the people with whom they traded while others were not. In the same way that it would be inaccurate to refer

to the Mande population of the Western Sudan as Arabs simply because they learned to write and speak some Arabic from traders from North Africa, so too is it inaccurate to label all of the coastal inhabitants of the central Gold Coast prior to the nineteenth century simply as "Akans," even though some of them used the Akan language and perhaps adopted Akan names.

The myth of Akan unity has major implications for the growing field of African diaspora history, which traces African culture across the Atlantic Ocean. The Akan are often treated as a homogenous group by scholars wishing to reference the African cultures from which enslaved Africans in the Americas hailed. Thus, there is a growing literature on societies of Akan descent in Jamaica, Barbados, and other parts of the Americas to which large numbers of captives purchased on the Gold Coast came in the era of the slave trade.[90] These scholars have, by necessity, drawn on the historiography of precolonial Ghana which, as already noted, has tended to treat the Akan as one homogenous group.[91] But in the eighteenth century, when most Akan-speaking captives were taken to Americas, Fante society looked very different from that of other Akan societies because of the unique coastal conditions within which southern Ghana's inhabitants lived. The coastal areas experienced tremendous migration and immigration during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, due to the growth of coastal towns and the migration of people to the coast to take advantage of the new opportunities for wealth accumulation. Others came to the coastal towns by force to become the slaves of the wealthy elite. In both cases, Akan speakers intermarried and intermingled extensively with non-Akan speakers.

Thus, lumping together enslaved peoples "of Akan origin" obscures major features of Gold Coast history and misrepresents the heritage of enslaved Africans in the Americas. A number of key questions that should be explored in diaspora studies remain unasked because of the myth of Akan unity. For instance, were Akan speakers from the forested interior of Ghana better able or more likely to establish maroon communities in the Americas than the Fante, whose background may have involved more experience with cosmopolitan coastal towns? And did elite coastal Africans, in the event of their own enslavement, find ways to improve their conditions within the slave populations in the Americas?

Turning Points

This study is conceived as an analysis of the period from 1700 to 1807 because of the convergence of several events in southern Ghana and the Atlantic World around those specific years. From an Atlantic perspective, 1700 and 1807 frame the period during which the Atlantic slave trade

was most prominently a part of coastal life in Ghana. Economic historians have estimated that the slave trade surpassed the gold trade around 1700 in terms of trade value. British abolition of the slave trade from Africa was implemented relatively quickly on the Gold Coast following its legal enactment in 1807. Of the estimated 1,209,300 enslaved Africans embarking from the Gold Coast, 1,086,000 (90 percent) left between 1701 and 1807.[92] From the perspective of Ghanaian history, these years were critical turning points because of the expansion of Asante. The Asante army's victory over the Kingdom of Denkyira in 1701 marked the dawn of Asante's military and political supremacy in the region. The year 1807 was significant for both Asante and the Coastal Coalition, because that was the year in which the former successfully invaded the latter, beginning a decade of warfare that destroyed the Coastal Coalition and finally extended Asante's power to the coveted central coast.

The similar timing of major turning points in the history of the Atlantic slave trade and in the history of southern Ghana is far from a coincidence. As shown in the chapters that follow, developments in the broader Atlantic World articulated closely with changes in political and commercial conditions in southern Ghana in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The process of state formation within Asante and the establishment of the Coastal Coalition evolved out of local and regional patterns of change, but they were also stimulated and shaped in their evolution by the growing demand for slave labor in the Americas and by competition between Dutch and British empire builders.

This study focuses on local developments within the African communities on the Gold Coast and how they affected the evolution of the transatlantic slave trade. The successful formation of the Coastal Coalition and its survival into the early 1800s diminished the profitability of fort-based "company" trade on the Gold Coast and encouraged the proliferation of commerce by interlopers and private traders from Europe and America. It also mitigated the enslavement of people in the coastal region by enabling protective institutions such as asafo companies. For the coastal African elites who harnessed economic opportunities and rode to positions of political, economic, or spiritual power in the region, the Atlantic slave trade created an opportunity to benefit from an Atlantic-wide system of commercial and cultural exchange. Governor Melvil's remark that the "Negros" were "masters" on this part of the West African coast is testimony to the success of the African elite in exploiting transatlantic trade for their own ends. For the majority of people living in southern Ghana during the era of the slave trade, however, the transatlantic trade necessitated the invention of new social and cultural institutions to protect individuals, families, and communities from the pervasive violence of that era. What follows is thus a story primarily about how those communities survived the era of the slave trade.

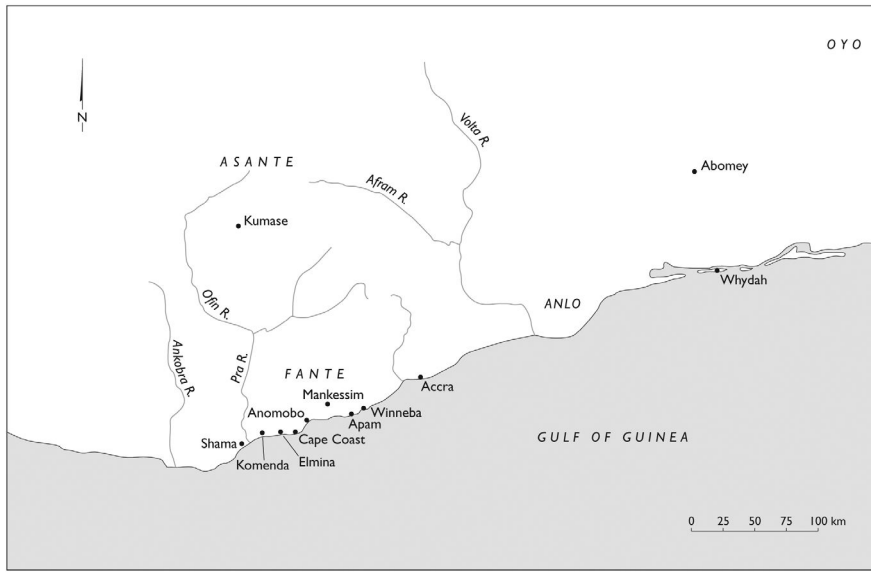


Figure I.3. Map of the Gold Coast and vicinity, circa 1750. Map by William L. Nelson.

A Note on Terminology: "Gold Coast," "Ghana," and "Fanteland"

The coast of modern-day Ghana was the point of export for a huge quantity of gold purchased by Europeans on the Atlantic shores of Africa throughout the early modern era. It was therefore quite logical, from the Portuguese point of view, to deem this the "Costa da Mina," or Mina Coast, which subsequent European traders translated as "Gold Coast." In the nineteenth century, Great Britain declared colonial rule over the area of modern-day Ghana and called it the Gold Coast Colony. Because of its historical usage by foreign imperialists, the name "Gold Coast" is unpopular in Ghana today. It is used here merely as a convenient reference to that part of the Atlantic coast of Africa that was known as the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century.

The name "Ghana" has a double meaning in African history. It was originally the name of a state formed in the vicinity of modern-day Mali and Mauritania around 800 CE. Ancient Ghana, as that state is sometimes called, was linked by trans-Saharan caravan trade to North Africa and the Mediterranean lands. The modern Republic of Ghana was named after the older Ghana of the Western Sudan when it was established in 1957. The term "Ghana" is used in this book to refer only to the Republic of Ghana or its current territories.

In some cases, I have employed the term "Fanteland" to refer loosely to the Fante-speaking area of southern Ghana. It is customary in African studies

to refer to the place inhabited by a group of people in this way, because territorial boundaries and place names have been fluid and changing throughout most of the African past. What is known today as the Fante language was evolving during the period covered by this study. It was influenced by interactions among a variety of people of diverse language backgrounds from many parts of coastal and inland West Africa and across the Atlantic World.

1

Selling Gold and Selling Captives

> The Gold Coast has changed into a complete Slave Coast.
>
> —Willem de la Palma, Elmina, 1705

Between 1400 and 1700 CE the lands that stretch from the seaside to the northern territories of modern-day Ghana were the site of tremendous change for their inhabitants. As with much of human history, long-distance trade and interactions between culturally diverse peoples drove many of the changes. Yet, as is always the case with human societies, these external stimuli also caused myriad forms of growth and change within communities over time. The first wave of change came from the north, where the caravan traders who had long crisscrossed the Sahara desert gradually extended their routes southward to the rainforest of modern-day Ghana for one simple reason: the land was endowed with some of the richest gold deposits on earth. The gold deposits of the Pra, Ofin, and Volta River basins attracted caravan traders from the Western Sudan in the early second millennium CE, long before maritime technology enabled distant foreigners to trade on Ghana's coast.[1] Processes of population growth, urbanization, and migration centered on the edge of the Sahara began to change the political, economic, and cultural landscape of southern Ghana, therefore, long before the activities of Europeans had any influence on historical change in West Africa.

European traders did initiate a second wave of change in the region, beginning with the arrival of Portuguese ships on the Gold Coast in the year 1471; however, the effects of European trade on the coast came slowly and in distinct phases. For the first two hundred years of European trade on Ghana's coastline, gold—not enslaved Africans—was the main commodity sought by European traders on the Gold Coast. During the 1600s several European kingdoms (including the Netherlands, England, France, Denmark, Sweden, and Brandenburg) competed for Gold Coast trade, building fortifications along Ghana's beaches to prevent one another from the lucrative gold trade. The trade in human captives on the Gold Coast in this era was between European sellers and African buyers, a total reversal of the pattern developing elsewhere in Atlantic Africa in the seventeenth century.

Slaves were increasingly used in the interior forests of Ghana for gold mining, farming, and expanding elites' households.[2]

This chapter considers some important aspects of southern Ghana's history prior to the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade on the coast and explains the significance of the transition in transatlantic trade from a focus on gold to a focus on enslaved Africans. It examines the evidence of a culturally and linguistically diverse population along the coast prior to the eighteenth century, which played an essential role in the way people responded to the extreme insecurity imposed by the growth of the slave trade. Particular attention will be paid to the Borbor Fante, a portion of the coastal population who traced their ancestry to migrants who moved southward from the Akan heartland (Tekyiman) and settled on the coast some time prior to 1471. The Borbor Fante became one of the wealthiest and most militarily powerful groups living on the Gold Coast in the seventeenth century, and they subsequently played critical roles in the formation of the Coastal Coalition.

By assessing the main economic, political, and cultural developments taking place in southern Ghana in the seventeenth century, this chapter lays the groundwork for analyzing the profound changes associated with the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade in the eighteenth century. The unique historical developments related to southern Ghana's gold resources profoundly affected the way the inhabitants of southern Ghana responded to the transatlantic slave trade when it ultimately did become the principal commercial activity on the coast. The Coastal Coalition owed its success in part to the acquisition of skills and techniques of Atlantic trade by coastal merchants, workers, and political authorities during the gold-trading era. Because trade between Africans and Europeans in southern Ghana centered on gold for more than two hundred years before shifting to a primarily slave-based trade, the population of southern Ghana had a unique opportunity to become familiar with the customs and practices of Atlantic trade under conditions that were not infused with the violence and inhumanity of slave trading.

Early History of Southern Ghana

Seventeenth-century changes in the government and economy of southern Ghana reveal adaptations to increased European trade on the coast, as well as continuations of much older processes of change rooted in the expansion of long-distance trade between southern Ghana and the Western Sudan. In the fourteenth century, the human population of the region drained by the Ofin, Pra, and Volta Rivers lived in dispersed, small-scale societies. Economic activity in the region included both a hunting-and-gathering mode of production and the use of iron tools in small-scale agriculture.[3] The region was mostly covered in dense, tropical rainforest, although trade with the Western Sudan to the north began by the start of the second millennium CE.[4] The dense vegetation

of this environment made it unsuitable for heavily populated societies prior to the fifteenth century. However, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the population engaged in new methods of production and exchange that enabled them to clear significant portions of the forest for farming and increase the size and complexity of their societies.[5]

The most significant source of economic stimulation and social change during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the expansion of long-distance trade with the Western Sudan. The key to this economic and social transformation was the gold-bearing soil, for which this land was later named. Gold resources attracted long-distance trade from northern marketplaces beginning in the early second millennium, but these commercial contacts became regularized and sustained in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Wangara traders, who had long bought gold in other gold-producing regions of West Africa and sold it to traders from north of the Sahara, began to tap the gold supply at a market town known as Bighu or, more commonly in Arabic sources, "Bitu."[6] Another important commodity that attracted traders from the north was kola nuts, which were a source of caffeine in West African diets.[7] Within the tropical rainforest of modern-day Ghana and eastern Côte d'Ivoire, these broader changes stimulated relatively rapid population growth and state formation by the seventeenth century.[8]

Slavery was probably part of the economy of southern Ghana from the formation of the first settled societies here, as it was in much of Africa.[9] The slow but steady growth of their gold trade enabled the population of the rainforest to tackle the enormous task of clearing and farming the tropical landscape by purchasing slaves. Gold was exchanged for slaves who did much of the work of gold mining and farming.[10] The additional food supply made available by expanded farming activity improved fertility and life expectancy, further increasing the size of the population from the fifteenth century onward. It is crucial to bear in mind that the main economic activities in this region from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries were farming, fishing, and salt-making; long-distance trade in gold and human captives was the business of a small minority.

Ghana's coastal lands felt the indirect effects of the growth of the northbound gold trade from the forest. Fish and salt from the sea were traded for bush meat and other forest products such as yam and palm oil.[11] In addition, coastal people engaged in a "coasting" trade with other societies windward and leeward no later than the mid-seventeenth century.[12]

Culture and Language

Historians' best sources for reconstructing the ethnolinguistic makeup of this region, in the era before indigenous people were documenting their own history, are maps.[13] Portuguese maps and written accounts by European traders

and travelers describe the inhabitants of the region in the early sixteenth century as "belonging to various tribes [*nações*]," including "the Bremus [Abremus], Atis [Etsis], Hacanys [Akanis], Boroes [Brong], Mandinguas, Cacres, Andeses or Souzos, and many others."[14] A map created by a Dutch trader in 1629, and apparently based on information provided by African informants, shows several small polities lining the Ghana coast (between the modern-day Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire border and Accra).[15] These include the small polities that competed fiercely for control of the gold trade in the later seventeenth century: Komenda/Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, Borbor Fante, Abrem, Wassa, Etsi, Agona, Akyem, and Akwamu. On a French map created in the 1680s, several of these polities are labeled as kingdoms (*régis*), although they were actually more comparable in size to European city-states (see fig. 1.1). European traders who lived on the coast in the seventeenth century were familiar with the boundaries of these small polities and knew the names of many of their individual "kings."[16] The governors of the Dutch and English trading companies frequently attempted to influence the succession patterns of local kings during the seventeenth century, in fact, to ensure that local leaders would be as amenable as possible to trade.[17]

The historical record provides only a vague sense of the origins and early development of the small coastal polities that Europeans noted on their maps and in their accounts. Some of the oral traditions collected in Fanteland indicate that their founders migrated southward to the coast from either Guan- or Akan-speaking areas in the forest interior, while others contend that the settlements are ancient and their ancestors descended from the sky and did not migrate from anywhere.[18] Historians have proposed a variety of interpretations of the ethnolinguistic heritage of the coastal population prior to the eighteenth century.[19] These tend to associate the several coastal polities with either Akan- or Guan-speaking ancestral populations, which coincides with the widespread modern-day usage of Akan, and to a lesser extent Guan languages, in southern Ghana today.[20] These interpretations also reinforce the claims of common ancestry among coastal (Fante) and inland (Twi) Akan and Guan speakers that are repeated in some oral traditions. Many scholars thus conclude that the coastal area is essentially Akan.

To some extent, the historiography misrepresents the linguistic data available from the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, which do not support the argument that the coast and hinterland were culturally homogenous. Paul Hair has published numerous studies of the European evidence available for the Gold Coast since 1450, including detailed analyses of the ethnolinguistic evidence available for the Guinea Coast.[21] While Hair notes several European sources that indicate the use of multiple languages on the Gold Coast in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, he inexplicably claims that all of these languages are Akan.[22] The most suggestive source is Olfert Dapper, who studied the accounts of Dutch visitors to the Gold Coast and

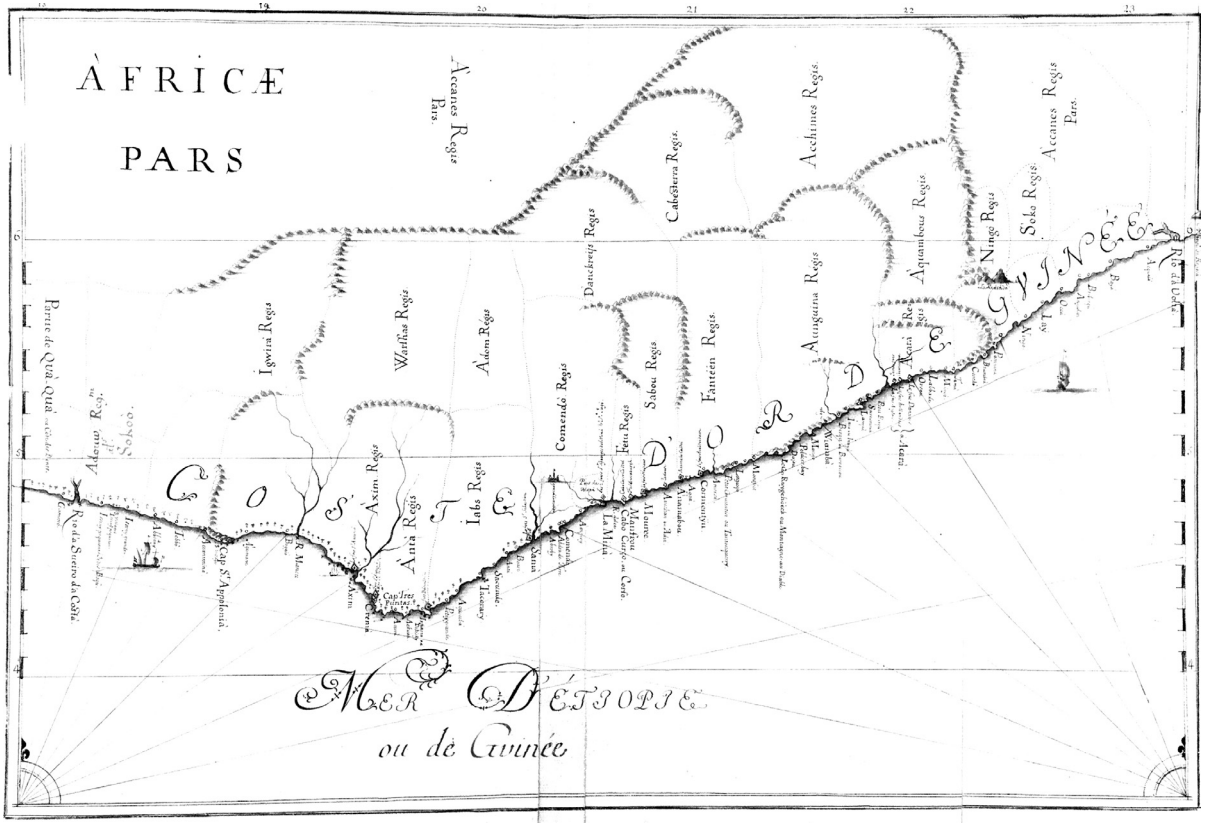


Figure 1.1. Map of the Gold Coast in the seventeenth century. Reproduced by permission from the National Archives, UK (MPI 1/631).

concluded that between Koromantijn [Kromantse] and Akara [Accra] there were four distinct languages spoken, and that the population near Cape Three Points (Ahanta) spoke a distinct language from those to the east.[23] Rather than taking seriously the possibility that multiple distinct languages were spoken on the coast—and that the region was therefore quite culturally diverse prior to the eighteenth century—Hair conflates Twi, Fanti, Guang, and Anyi-Baule, referring to them all as "broad divisions within Akan."[24]

Regardless of the uncertainty among scholars surrounding the origins and possible migrations of the populations of southern Ghana prior to their settlement along the coast, the accounts of eyewitness observers clearly indicate that coastal groups exhibited recognizable cultural and linguistic variation prior to the nineteenth century. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century, Thomas Thompson, an English missionary who lived on the Gold Coast for five years during the 1750s and was personally familiar with numerous Africans, including the principal political authority in the town of Anomabo (the Anomabohene), wrote, "The language of the coast is very various, each nation having that which is peculiarly its own, though some of them be scarcely wider in their bounds than one of our largest parishes, only they are thicker peopled."[25] Henry Meredith, who lived on the Ghana coast for nearly twenty years, notes that in Winneba the language called "Afoetic" was indigenous to that part of the coast but was used less often than "the Fantee language" by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Meredith also distinguishes between the language spoken in the hinterland and the Fante language spoken "on the sea-coast," in which contained "many phrases and words . . . mixed with it."[26]

Oral traditions also provide evidence that the Akan speakers who settled near the coast prior to 1500 encountered an indigenous people who were culturally different from the forest Akan. Traditions collected by John Kofi Fynn (a native Fante speaker) in the Central Region of Ghana during the 1970s consistently refer to the fact that the Akan migrants, "came to find the Abrem, the Etsi, the Eguafo, the Efutu and the Asebu already settled in the forests and coastlands of Ghana."[27] These groups were regarded by the Akan settlers as strangers who could legitimately be made political dependents.[28]

Anthropological studies have presented compelling evidence for the existence of both matrilineal and patrilineal descent patterns in the region, deepening our understanding of the area's multicultural heritage. Anthropologists disagree on whether the modern-day Fante can be categorized as a society with a full-fledged "double descent" structure—an extremely rare kinship pattern in which individuals are simultaneously members of two exogamous lineages.[29] There is nevertheless general agreement that kinship structures in Fanteland display elements of multiple distinct cultures, including Akan, that appear to have blended together over time.[30] Understanding the history of the coastal region in the Atlantic era, then, depends

on a better understanding of the variations within the Akan language group than historians have had to this point. Such a project remains to be taken up by historical linguists, but for the time being, it is important to recognize that there is evidence suggesting significant linguistic variation among the coastal groups prior to the eighteenth century. The array of non-Akan linguistic elements present in what is known today as the Fante language suggests a history involving complex patterns of migration, intermarriage, and cultural exchange among different groups.[31]

The Borbor Fante

The name "Borbor Fante" refers to the ancestors of the modern-day Fante people in southern Ghana.[32] It is used in this study to refer to the inhabitants of the lands between the lower Pra and Volta Rivers during the period from roughly 1400 to 1750 who had the following attributes: they regarded the town of Mankessim as the original settlement of their ancestors in the region; they were members of lineages engaged in mutual dependency and obligations with the ruling lineages of Mankessim; and they spoke a language that was a forebear of the modern-day Fante language. Descriptions of the Gold Coast written by Europeans during this period sometimes suggest the existence of a Borbor Fante kingdom in the vicinity of Mankessim; however, the nature of the political authority remains largely unknown.[33] If there ever was a single political ruler of the community—who may or may not have been known as the "Braffo"—it is reasonable to assume that the heads of lineages and spiritual leaders wielded at least as much power among the Borbor Fante as the ruler.

Fante traditions state that the earliest Borbor Fante were a group of Akan-speaking migrants who left what is now the Brong Region of modern Ghana around the fourteenth century CE and settled near the coast at the towns of Kwaman and Mankessim (in the Central Region of modern Ghana).[34] Their migration was led by three ancestors named Oburumankuma, Odapagyan, and Osun. The mortal remains of these three ancestral leaders are purportedly buried in a sacred grove called Nananom Mpow near Mankessim.[35] Oral traditions assert, and most historians have taken for granted, that the Borbor Fante had settled on the coast prior to the arrival of the Portuguese in 1471, though the earliest documentary evidence of a place called Fante dates from 1505.[36] There are many possible explanations for a migration of Akan-speaking people southward to the coast from the forest interior. Some groups may have sought political domination for the sake of accumulating labor, or they may simply have been moving out of a place that was becoming overpopulated. Oral traditions sometimes indicate that the ancestors of the Borbor Fante were a group that was "driven out" by Asante. While technically

anachronistic (Asante did not exist before the late 1600s), this tradition may suggest that the migrants were compelled by other Akan to leave.[37]

The term *bor* implies walking from one place to another. When repeated, as in *borbor*, it suggests walking a long way, or migrating.[38] Oral traditions suggest that the name Fante may have come from a particular leafy vegetable called *efan*, which grows in the coastal region and was a popular food of the early Borbor Fante settlers.[39] Another interpretation of the name is that this group of migrants were considered to have broken away from the whole, and they were therefore called *fa Atsew* (meaning broken half)—and that *fa Atsew-fo* (broken-half people) became *Mfantefuo*, or simply Fante.[40] The territory later known as Fante was referred to on sixteenth-century maps as Ele*fante* Grande (lit., big elephant).[41] Fante traditions claim that the Borbor Fante are the ancestors of modern-day Fante speakers; however, the history of the coastal area involved a tremendous amount of intermarriage and migration between Borbor Fante and non-Akan people, indicating that this claim refers more to a sense of connectedness between modern-day Fantes and the Borbor Fante than to a literal ancestral relationship.

Some time before the fifteenth century, Borbor Fantes created a small polity around the modern-day town of Mankessim, gradually settling the area around that central town (Mankessim literally means "big town" in Akan). The existence of this polity is noted on a Dutch map dated 1629, which identifies "Fantijn" between the polities of Asebu and Agona.[42] A court case from the colonial period summarizes the oral tradition of the Fantes on this subject, stating that, "according to Fantiland traditional history in the Gold Coast," there was a "dispersal of the different Fanti tribal groups from Mankessim along with the Aburas, Ekunfis, Nkusukums &c for the purpose, undoubtedly, of finding more room for expansion after their successful contests for settlement with the Asebus, Etsies and some other peoples whom, it is said, they had met in this country on their arrival from Tekyiman."[43]

During the initial phases of the formation of the Borbor Fante polity, southern Ghana was clearly divided into an Akan-speaking hinterland and coastlands where linguistic and cultural elements intermingled. The widespread use of Akan languages across the region—Fante on the coast and Asante Twi in the hinterland—probably developed slowly as long-distance trade gradually created more occasions for travel and interaction among coastal and hinterland groups. Only in the late seventeenth century, as regular caravans of Akan-speaking traders brought gold to the Europeans' seaside forts, did Akan became a lingua franca of African traders on the Gold Coast. The early Borbor Fante people contributed to the blending of Akan (Twi) and other languages, including Portuguese, which were in use on the coast. The success of Borbor Fante elites in trade and politics during the late seventeenth century and afterward further expanded the use of Akan (Twi), eventually resulting in what is now known as the Fante language.[44]

European Trade on the Gold Coast before 1600

The growth of transoceanic European trading networks in the fifteenth century initiated new kinds of interactions among societies around the world, and especially among those around the Atlantic Ocean basin. Southern Ghana had a unique place in this growing Atlantic World, but it also participated in and was shaped by patterns of change that were common to other regions around the Atlantic. Because it housed numerous Atlantic port towns, southern Ghana eventually developed interracial and intercultural urban centers comparable in many ways to those forming in Bahia, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, and Liverpool in the early modern period.[45] Urbanization on Ghana's coast also involved a changing relationship between the coast and hinterland, as was the case in Atlantic port cities elsewhere.[46]

Prior to 1600 the inhabitants of coastal Ghana experienced the growth of Atlantic trade very differently from Africans living elsewhere along West Africa's coastline. In general, European trade in West and West Central Africa focused overwhelmingly on the purchase of captive Africans to be sold as slaves in the Americas. But on Ghana's coast, the main commodity of trade from the 1470s to 1690s was gold.[47] In the late fifteenth century, Portuguese traders found that the gold-sellers on Ghana's coast were eager to acquire slaves. The Portuguese quickly organized a shipping pattern whereby they purchased enslaved Africans at other West African coastal markets and resold them in southern Ghana in exchange for gold.[48] The Portuguese thus established a monopoly on the European export trade from the Gold Coast that lasted until the 1630s.

While Portugal was making the most of its Gold Coast monopoly, of course, its empire was expanding globally in ways that would ultimately bring West Africa into a much larger and more complex trade network spanning the globe and linking it with other Atlantic Ocean ports. Portugal's most lucrative trading posts on the African coast turned out to be those at Luanda and Benguela in modern-day Angola, where African Portuguese trade consisted primarily of human captives from its beginnings in the fifteenth century. After the production of sugar on plantations in Brazil was proven to be a viable investment for Portuguese businessmen in the sixteenth century, Portuguese ships increasingly embarked with enslaved Africans from the West Central African coast, particularly Angola. By 1640 the slave trade from Africa to the Americas had carried an estimated 822,000 captive people into slavery, roughly 70 percent of them aboard ships flying Portuguese or Brazilian flags.[49]

Yet because of the gold trade, only 68 of these 822,000 captives were purchased on the Gold Coast. European traders set the stretch of land between Cape Three Points and the River Volta (which corresponds to the coastline of the Central and Accra Regions of present-day Ghana) apart from other

African lands as a place for buying African gold.[50] For two centuries representatives of European trading companies intentionally suppressed the slave trade on the Gold Coast to protect their interests in gold.[51] European traders and administrators believed that the immensely profitable gold trade on the Ghana coast would be disrupted if slave trading developed there on a large scale.[52]

Gold, then, put southern Ghana in a unique position vis-à-vis early Atlantic commercial networks. As a consequence of European commercial policies, the number of enslaved Africans departing from the Ghana coast averaged only about one thousand per year as late as 1650–95. By comparison, the coasts of modern-day Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Angola, saw the departure of several times as many captives during those years (table 1.1).[53] By the late seventeenth century, from their point of view, European traders were quite literal in referring to these two stretches of land as the "Gold Coast" and "Slave Coast," respectively.

The European maritime trade in gold from present-day Ghana began much later than the trans-Saharan trade in gold from the same area, and it met with far less success in its initial decades. Even as the coastal gold trade grew, the bulk of Ghana's gold exports continued to flow into the northern markets of the Sudan, and on across the Sahara to Mediterranean markets. The trans-Saharan trade networks, and adjacent systems such as the Niger River markets, were highly developed, efficient, and consistent to a degree that European maritime trade was not in the fifteenth century.[54] Except for towns lying on the coastline itself, the societies of central and southern Ghana continued to be influenced far more by their commercial and cultural ties with the Western Sudan than by European contacts up to the mid-seventeenth century.

The early years of Portuguese trade on the West African coast took place in a relatively diplomatic and nonviolent manner.[55] Initial attempts by the Portuguese to forcefully take what they wanted—gold, ivory, slaves—failed. Raids and firing on African towns often had the long-term effect of ruining trade in that location. Those with a long-term stake in the African trade learned to prevent such hostilities and, to retain good relations with potential African trade partners, even demanded that ships return goods and people that had been seized. Moreover, Ghana's coastal societies had a highly developed maritime culture of their own and were quite adept at protecting their own shores using specially designed canoes that were maneuverable regardless of the wind conditions and could carry fifty to a hundred men.[56]

Maintaining amicable relations with those who supplied the gold and ivory required European traders to learn a complex practice of appeasing local African rulers. The Portuguese were obliged to supply regular gifts to African notables and to pay a ground rent for any structures they built or inhabited on the West African coast.[57] African rulers sometimes supplied

gifts in return, but the main purpose of the "tax" on Europeans was to ensure that the local authorities received the first choice of trade goods and had the opportunity to set prices. Through this system, by the sixteenth century, Afro-European trade on the Ghana coast was mainly conducted according to unwritten rules of peaceful diplomacy.[58]

Seventeenth-Century Changes

Southern Ghana's place in the emerging Atlantic World took on new dimensions in the seventeenth century, when competition among European traders initiated a new wave of European settlements on the coast and introduced a more combative element. A critical turning point occurred when the Dutch entered into the Gold Coast trade in the 1590s and established a fort at Moure in 1612.[59] The Netherlanders challenged Portuguese dominance in maritime trade on a global scale during this period, marking their imminent expansion into the slave trade with a successful invasion of Portuguese territories in Brazil in 1624. Portugal's African territories soon after became vulnerable to Dutch encroachment on what had hitherto been a virtual Portuguese monopoly on the Ghana coast. In 1637 the Dutch captured Elmina, the center of Portuguese commercial activity on the Gold Coast, beginning a brief period of Dutch dominance on Ghana's coast.[60] Soon after the Dutch ousted the Portuguese, however, several other European companies staked their own claims on the Gold Coast. Companies representing Sweden, Denmark, England, and the Brandenburg state secured fortified outposts on the Ghana coast between the 1640s and 1680s, while the Dutch increased their own number of forts and expanded Elmina Castle.[61] The English marked the ambitions of their recently formed Royal African Company (1672) by increasing the size of Cape Coast Castle—which they had seized from the Danes, who had taken it from the Swedes—and mounting on it numerous guns to fend off European competitors.[62] Meanwhile, the overall tonnage handled in Ghana's port towns grew to ten thousand tons per year by 1650, compared to only three thousand tons per year in the early 1500s.[63]

The era of the gold trade gave birth to an "Atlantic creole" culture on the Gold Coast similar in many ways to that of other Atlantic African groups.[64] Atlantic creoles were individuals living in seaside towns around the Atlantic Ocean basin during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries who shared a common knowledge of the languages, customs, and commercial practices of transatlantic trade.[65] They were conversant in Portuguese (or a pidgin thereof) and conscious of the competing claims of European nations to trade monopolies and territories. They knew the units of weights and measures used by European traders, were familiar with credit practices and understood which goods were available and at what prices, and understood

the fluctuating prices of heavily traded merchandise such as sugar, cotton textiles, and slaves. A fair number of Atlantic creoles were sailors and pirates, but many others worked on land in the ports around the Atlantic. Like Atlantic creoles in Bahia, New Orleans, Bristol, or Luanda, the Gold Coast merchants and laborers who participated in the seventeenth-century gold trade operated within an international commercial sphere in which specialized knowledge was essential to profitable trade.[66]

Because gold was still more valuable than slaves in Atlantic Africa in the seventeenth century, however, the Atlantic creoles of the Gold Coast witnessed—and participated in—competition between European traders that was perhaps more intense than anywhere else in Atlantic Africa. The plantation economies of the Americas had not yet developed enough to consume the thousands of cargoes of slaves that would arrive there in later decades, so the gold trade was still a much more valuable investment for most European businessmen in the seventeenth century.[67] The slave trade gradually developed elsewhere on the western African coast where gold was not available, usually with one European nation dominating trade at any particular site. But the Gold Coast attracted trade from several European nations at once—including not just the Dutch and English trading companies but also those of Denmark, Sweden, and Brandenburg—all within a stretch of fewer than three hundred miles of coastline. African workers and traders on the Gold Coast in the seventeenth century therefore witnessed firsthand the schemes and struggles engaged in by Europeans competing for access to the country's gold.

The large seaside towns of Cape Coast and Elmina functioned more or less as autonomous city-states during this period. The large European castles that set them apart from other coast towns increasingly influenced local politics in these towns, in effect turning them into enclaves of the English and Dutch trading companies, respectively. The polities Fetu and Eguafo lost control of Elmina around 1514, when the Portuguese assisted the independence of Elmina from inland rule.[68] From that time, Portuguese traders had some influence on the government of Elmina. The Dutch became even more involved in Elmina affairs after they took over Elmina Castle in 1637, organizing African militias and distributing flags and company numbers to them.[69] The area around Cape Coast became an independent polity largely due to the initiatives of Birempong Kodwo (known in English records as Cudjo Caboceer), who was both a paid agent of England's Royal African Company and the political leader (*ohin*) of Cape Coast town.[70]

While the empire-building aspirations of European nations sparked changes on the Ghana coast, a similar process—albeit on a much smaller scale—played out in the forest interior of southern and central Ghana. The rise of politically centralized, expansionist states ("kingdoms")—Akwamu, Denkyira, and Asante—marked a profound change in the political organiza-

tion of the Gold Coast hinterland.[71] The history of these states and their rise to power in the seventeenth century has been the topic of numerous earlier studies.[72] The earliest of these states was Akwamu, which expanded outward from the Atewa hills to control the area of modern-day Akwapim as well as the area between the Volta River (now Lake Volta) and the modern-day Ghana-Togo border. Akwamu eventually conquered Accra and coastal points farther east, between the mid-1600s and early 1700s.[73] Denkyira followed a similar course of expansion in southwestern Ghana, conquering lands along the northern part of the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire border in the mid-1600s and seizing lands near the western Ghana coast in the 1680s.[74] Denkyira controlled the gold-producing areas of the western interior (modern-day Brong-Ahafo and Asante Regions) for about fifty years, from the 1650s to 1690s. The Asante Kingdom eventually trumped both of these by defeating Denkyira in 1701 and Akwamu (by then under the rule of Akyem) in 1742 to become the supreme power in the region.

Denkyria's wars of expansion increased its control of gold mining and expanded its tax base. As Willem Bosman explains, the king of Denkyira seized gold and took control of the gold trade throughout his expanding domain:

> The Dinkiras possessed a great wealth of gold, not so much from what they had got out of their own Country, but more from loot out of other countries and from their profit out of trade; because at that time none of the blacks could be compared with them in the field of trade.[75]

These wars also produced captives who were enslaved for either internal use or export to foreign (either African or European) buyers. Slaves were used in gold mining and as porters, as well as in the retinues of kings.[76]

The Akani Trading Organization

Linking the gold-producing regions of the interior and the Atlantic markets of the coast was the primary occupation of one of the most important groups in southern Ghana during the seventeenth century: a community of traders known to European observers as the Akani or Akanists.[77] The Akani were the main gold traders in southern Ghana throughout the period when gold was the primary commodity of trade on the coast.[78] As with other groups residing beyond the coast and out of sight of the Europeans, the political and cultural features of the Akani are difficult to identify from contemporary documents.[79] The Akani appear to have been a multiethnic group of traders who carried trade from several markets located in what is now known as the Assin area of modern-Ghana (between Asanteland and Fanteland) south-

ward to the Atlantic coast, and northward to lands beyond the forest.[80] The Akani caravans carried trade through the territories of numerous polities on the coast, apparently relying on diplomacy rather than war to establish commercial control of the gold trade in the seventeenth century.[81]

As intermediary traders and politically decentralized Akan speakers, the Akani represent essential predecessors to the Fante people of modern times.[82] Because of the Akani trade networks, the Akan language became the lingua franca of the gold trade among Africans in southern Ghana during the seventeenth century.[83] The intermediary trade system set up by the Akani merchants was later adapted and incorporated by the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century.

Historians have disagreed in their interpretations of the nature of Akani government and whether or not there ever was a distinct Akani state, kingdom, or group of states.[84] The frequency of warfare in the area where the Akani lived and traded was so great that they may have been sovereign at times and scattered at other times. Whether or not they ever organized into a formal state, the Akani certainly had an organizational structure that enabled them to engage in diplomatic relations with polities in the region. Akani trading caravans connected several coastal towns belonging to autonomous states to the inland gold-mining regions, and they were known to pass through the inland states of Wassa, Abrem, Twifo, and Akyem. As early as the 1610s there was a gold trader, probably an Akani, residing at the main Borbor Fante town, Mankessim.[85] Eric Tilleman wrote in the 1690s of "the kingdom of Acania," which he said traded with Africans in the "neighboring kingdoms of Acara, Fantyn, Sabu, Fetu, Adumb [Adom] and other small provinces at the coast." Olfert Dapper noted that Borbor Fante obtained revenues in part by collecting taxes on merchandise that the "Acanistes" came to buy in their territory.[86]

The Akani were first mentioned in European records in the early sixteenth century. The Portuguese identified "Acane" as one of the polities or "nations" they believed lay in the interior of the Gold Coast, while the Dutch referred to Akanists in the early seventeenth century as members of a particular profession—namely gold traders—rather than as citizens of a clearly defined state.[87] Throughout the 1600s the Akani were "famed for great Traders."[88] Later, in the seventeenth century, Dutch officials referred to the Accanists as a nation but often mentioned their division into various parts or competing groups—again suggesting a network of traders, or groups of traders, rather than a unified political entity.

The Akani traders carried goods purchased on the coast to "frontier" markets on the northern borders of coastal polities. The location of this commercial frontier was impermanent, shifting with the changing balance of power between numerous small polities in the forest zone between the coast and the confluence point of the Pra and Ofin Rivers. As the European

maps created in the seventeenth century show, the political organization of this area was a patchwork of small-scale groups, the layout of which changed repeatedly over time. This same zone was where the Asante Kingdom and the Coastal Coalition would later fight over the boundary line between their two zones of influence in the eighteenth century.

The Akani also maintained relationships with the European outposts, ensuring that among the employees in the forts and castles there was someone who understood the Akan (Acania) language.[89] Akani merchants lived in or near all of the towns where Europeans traded. Each received a fixed monthly allowance and goods from the company operating in that town. When merchants came from "Accania," they conducted their trade through this Akani "captain."[90]

> The Accanists who live in the villages on the coast buy in person the goods which they send inland, for they fully understand which goods are marketable and find the best purchase. Consequently, each nation trading there tries hard to get its hands on many Accanists, through sweet words and presents. The natives of the Fetu country often buy only those European goods which they need to meet the requirements of their bodies.[91]

The most eminent Akani traders became linguists of the English or Dutch companies and received regular salaries.[92]

In some ways, the organization of the Akani intermediary trading network in the seventeenth century resembled patterns of change taking place elsewhere in West Africa at the same time. As Africa was integrated into the emergent Atlantic economic system from its coastline inward, ambitious people took advantage of the commercial opportunities available to those who could connect the supply centers of the interior (gold mines or slave markets) with the European traders on the coast. For example, in Angola, the 1600s were a period of an enlarging trade and transport system for both slaves and foodstuffs.[93] Similar processes occurred on the Cameroun Rivers, where Douala merchants controlled trade from at least the 1650s, and in southeastern Nigeria, where the Aro formed a trading community that connected various coastal brokers with inland markets. The Senegambia region responded to the breakdown of Portugal's monopoly and the increase in Dutch, French, and English competition with expanding networks of trade into the interior as well. All of these examples differ from the Akani in that they were primarily slave-trading networks rather than gold-trading networks, but the pattern of expanding trade networks looks similar across Atlantic Africa.[94]

The manner in which the Akani trade organization declined helps to explain how the Gold Coast differed from other parts of Atlantic Africa because of its entry into Atlantic commerce as a center of gold trading rather than slave trading. The immediate cause of the decline of the Akani caravan

trade was the conquest of much of the forest by the expanding militarized Kingdom of Denkyira in 1698.[95] In its conquest of what is now known as the Assin area, Denkyira seized control of the gold markets that had fueled Akani trade across the region. Twelve years later, in 1710, Asante conquered these areas again, taking control from Denkyira. But as Ray Kea has argued, the decline of the Akani commercial system was also part of a broader trend by which long-distance trade in the southern half of modern-day Ghana was shifting from an orientation around gold mining to an orientation around the capture of human beings for sale. As Kea notes, "following in the wake of conquering mass armies, these groups [expanding imperial states] were able to acquire numerous war prisoners who in turn were sold at the European trading establishments. The export of slaves replaced the export of gold."[96] The Akani did not have access to a supply of captured men, women, and children because they were not an expansionist state that regularly accumulated enslaved people by taking prisoners of war or demanding tribute in the form of human beings from subject territories. And they could not establish themselves as intermediaries in the slave trade between Asante and the Europeans on the coast because their towns and villages were militarily defeated and occupied by Denkyira and its successor, Asante. In short, the Akani could not compete because they lacked military strength in a region that began to rapidly militarize in the late seventeenth century. In the same decade that the export of slaves exceeded the export of gold on the coast, then, the Akani commercial system collapsed and gave way to what Kea calls "military corporations"—a new commercial system in which military power was essential for competition in trade.[97]

Beyond the southern border of Asante, in Fanteland, many of the methods of trade introduced by the Akani were adopted by the merchant-warlords who established control over trade within the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century. A number of aspects of Akani trade continued to serve the interests of the coastal traders during the slave trade. The key to Akani success was that they never formed permanent alliances or trade agreements with individual European trading companies, which coastal elites at Elmina, Cape Coast, and Accra were doing in the era of the gold trade. Instead, the Akani remained free to trade with whoever offered the most favorable terms of trade.[98] This spirit of "free trade" was central to the success of the Coastal Coalition in its control of the intermediary trade in slaves during the eighteenth century.

Ascendancy of Seaside Towns

The development of Atlantic trade on the Ghana coast during the seventeenth century contributed to a gradual shift in power from the inland capitals of the

coastal polities to the expanding seaside towns. The growth of the port town of Anomabo at the end of the seventeenth century was one of the most significant developments marking the transition from the gold-trade era to the slave-trade era. Anomabo displaced Kromantse as the principal coastal town of the Borbor Fante polity during the seventeenth century and became the principal slave market on the Gold Coast during the eighteenth century.[99] Anomabo typified a larger trend on the seventeenth-century Gold Coast whereby the power of royal families based at inland capitols gave way to the influence of chiefs and "big-men" (*abirempong*) based in coast towns.

The growth of Anomabo was grounded in the expansion of trade there, but it also involved militarization. Willem Bosman described Anomabo at the close of the seventeenth century as a military power:

> The town Annamabo may very well pass for the strongest on the whole coast, affording as many armed men as the whole kingdom of Saboe or Commany; and this constitutes only a fifth part of Fantyn [Borbor Fante], so that you measure from this the latter's might.[100]

The source of the increasing wealth of the coastal elite can be clearly seen in the records of the Royal African Company, which made regular payments and *dashees* (gifts) to two sets of prominent men at Anomabo: the Akani captains and the Borbor Fante "caboceers."[101] The former most likely invested their wealth in expanding their commercial operations and in their households in the forest hinterland from whence they traveled to the coast. The local caboceers, however, included a range of individuals whose trade and political influence were rooted locally in Anomabo or nearby Borbor Fante towns. Caboceers included an ever-widening group of individuals who were able to influence the flow of trade and the maintenance of law and order in Anomabo. In the late seventeenth century, this included the "chiefs" or traditional rulers of the settlements at Mankessim, Abura, Anomabo, Agya, and Anishan, as well as merchants whose power was based on their wealth rather than birth.[102] As the Akani lost control of trade at the close of the seventeenth century, the caboceers became the exclusive recipients of these payments.

Those who worked directly for the European forts received regular monthly wages, which gave them a new status in society. For example, one particularly vital new occupation was that of headporters, who literally carried goods on their heads, traveling tens of miles between the interior and the coast. This occupation gave any able-bodied man a chance to accumulate a little capital and set himself up as a trader.[103] Construction and maintenance of company forts and the hauling of goods and people between them and offshore ships provided increased work for canoemen, masons, soldiers, bricklayers, interpreters, and brokers of all kinds.[104]

The skills and knowledge gained by Gold Coast elites in the decades of the gold trade—particularly from the 1650s to the 1690s, just before slave trading overtook gold trading—continued to serve later generations during the slave trade. Political authorities and merchants in the Coastal Coalition were exceptionally effective at dictating the terms of trade along Ghana's central stretch of coast. To the east, the Anlo-Ewe and coastal residents of the Bight of Benin lost control of the trade to mightier inland powers—namely Akwamu and Dahomey.[105] In the Bight of Biafra, decentralized coastal societies raided each other in an overall process of diminishing political control, even as some African elites in towns such as Bonny and Old Calabar increased their commercial power.[106] And in West Central Africa (including the coast from Cabinda to Angola), the growth of the slave trade was accompanied by extensive European involvement in coastal affairs.

By contrast, the coastal population in southern Ghana retained its autonomy against the would-be encroachment of expanding African states (especially Asante) and European traders eager to manipulate the terms of trade, while creating a politico-military structure that ensured a degree of law and order to protect coastal inhabitants from extensive raiding. Thus, in the very territory where the majority of fortified European castles were built, giving the appearance of European control, the Africans residing under those structures were actually exercising greater control over trade than was typical for coastal West Africa in this period. The coastal elite found a way to prevent the Gold Coast slave trade from devolving into a bloody free-for-all or coming under monopoly control by one African king; they were able to do so, in part, because they learned the skills and techniques of Atlantic trade under conditions that were not yet infused with the violence associated with the full force of the Atlantic slave trade.

Coastal Warfare in the Late Seventeenth Century

The coastal polities—including Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, Fantyn (Borbor Fante), and Agona—waged numerous wars against one another in the second half of the seventeenth century and were engaged in chronic warfare from the 1680s to early 1700s. Unlike the wars of expansion waged by centralized states in the forest interior, the coastal wars in the area between the Pra River and Accra in this period show a pattern of looting and killing of political leaders without territorial conquest. These wars reveal the heightened competition among coastal elites for control of the gold trade on the coast, as well as the breakdown of government within the individual coastal polities. Warfare on the coast in this period was characterized by small-scale skirmishes between polities in which the victors withdrew with their booty and the vanquished reestablished political autonomy.[107] These wars were a

prelude to warfare among coastal states in the early eighteenth century in which the coastal polities lost their sovereignty and were replaced by the new government of the Coastal Coalition.[108]

The era of endemic warfare on the coast began around the same time that Akwamu began to wage wars of territorial conquest in the forest interior, marking a distinct shift from the more peaceful first half of the seventeenth century.[109] Dutch residents on the coast in the 1670s made the following observation:

> The whole Coast has come into a kind of state of war. This started in the year 1658, and gradually this has gone so far, that none of the passages could anymore be used, and none of the traders could come through.[110]

Warfare between coastal states escalated in the 1680s, both in frequency and in the participation of a greater percentage of the population.[111] A joint Borbor Fante-Sebu attack on Fetu in 1688 marked the beginning of the chronic fighting on the coast.[112] Eyewitness accounts report that 5,400 men plus a "traine" of suppliers and porters were involved in this attack. Of the population remaining in Borbor Fante and Asebu, this observer wrote, "there is not a Cabushier or a man left that is able to carry arms," indicating the total recruitment of able-bodied men.[113]

The wars between the coastal polities in the seventeenth century were characterized by a relatively high degree of European involvement, compared to wars in the same region during the eighteenth century. Because the coastal polities were competing against each other for control of trade routes and the right to tax Akani and other merchants carrying gold from inland states to the coast, they eagerly accepted the financial support of European traders who offered to assist them in attacking their neighbors. This situation would change once the Coastal Coalition organized the coastal elite, but in the era of the gold trade each coastal polity pursued its own aims against its neighbors. Europeans provoked some of the wars on the coast in this period not because they had military dominance over the African population, but because they could offer money and goods—particularly firearms and gunpowder—that African armies needed to compete effectively in battle.[114]

In general, warfare in precolonial West Africa should not be seen as a direct response to European activities. As John Kelly Thornton has convincingly demonstrated, Europeans lacked the knowledge and power to directly cause significant warfare between African polities, and the role of European manipulation in African wars has been exaggerated.[115] The intention of Europeans involved in African wars in southern Ghana in the seventeenth century was to increase the flow of trade—primarily the gold trade in this period. These were in no way wars of European conquest or colonization of African territory. To

be sure, the sustained presence of Europeans offering locally desirable goods in exchange for gold, ivory, and—increasingly—slaves created competition between different African groups on the coast. Sometimes this competition took the form of warfare. But the violence between Africans was usually an *indirect* consequence of transatlantic trade on the coast; it was usually initiated by Africans for distinctly African purposes.

Nevertheless, beginning with the Dutch capture of Elmina from the Portuguese in 1637, Europeans did sometimes hire African mercenaries to pursue military activities designed to increase profits for the European employer. These armies-for-hire attacked both African polities and European competitors at different times.[116] As the personal accounts of Eric Tilleman demonstrate, Europeans took note of which towns on the coast had a ready supply of armed men who could be mustered for war.[117] He noted the following numbers of armed men at coastal towns in the 1680s: three hundred at Apam, one thousand at Elmina, four hundred at Cape Coast, one hundred at Mouri, and three hundred at Cormantin. Tilleman remarked that, by contrast, the other towns on the coast were populated mostly by "fishermen."[118]

The joint military efforts of European traders and African armies involved complex negotiations between European and African authorities. Such military endeavors were sometimes initiated by Europeans seeking to hire armies and also by Africans seeking financial assistance or armament from a European outpost. The following example is a fairly typical account of the latter situation—in this case a request by the king and abirempong of Fetu for a loan from the Dutch at Elmina Castle. In this case, the goods were to be used to hire mercenaries from Akani and Twifo to assist the Fetu in an attack on Asebu.

> The King, Fetaire, Dey and Samin of Fitu came inside the Castle [Elmina] to ask H. E. for a surety of 120 or 130 bendas in merchandise, to be given to the Accaniste and the Krufose, in order that the latter assist them against Saboe. In consideration of the fact that Fitu is still indebted to us for an amount of 68 bendas, that matters of war are impredictable [*sic*] and that in case of a defeat of Fitu there will be little hope for the repayment of the first as well as the new debt, but on the other hand that, if we did not assist Fitu, it is highly probable that the Accaniste and the Krufose will join Saboe and defeat Fitu, in which case there will be here at Myna, as well as at Commany, as little trade as there is presently at Moure; whilst if Saboe were defeated, we might not only count on a continuation of the trade here and at Commany, but also on the re-opening of the passages to Mouree . . . resolved to lend Fitu the said 120 to 130 bendas.[119]

As the passage shows, the Dutch agents at Elmina had to consider the possible ways in which an attack by Fetu on Asebu might help or hinder Dutch

trade on the coast. Clearly, European involvement in African wars did not always result in an outcome that was favorable for the Europeans. In this case, Fetu and all the African polities near Elmina became embroiled in an even larger dispute, the so-called Komenda Wars (1687–1702), a few years after this document was written, negating any benefits the Dutch might have accrued from their loan of 120 bendas (the equivalent of 240 oz. gold or £960) to the Fetu leaders.[120] European involvement could also take the form of payments to one group or another to prevent wars. In a dispute between Twifo and Komenda in 1693, for example, the Dutch company made such a payment in hopes of averting a war that they thought was likely to disrupt trade.[121]

The series of conflicts known as the Komenda Wars reveals the fundamental goals that warring coastal polities sought to achieve in this period, as well as a major unanticipated outcome of these wars.[122] These goals primarily involved an increased share in the gold trade. State formation and territorial expansion were not relevant concerns. In the midst of the struggle, however, the coastal polities revealed their relative military strengths and weaknesses and began to form protective alliances that are suggestive of the coalition structure that would emerge in the eighteenth century.

The Komenda Wars stemmed from conflicts between the Dutch West Indies Company (WIC) and African political authorities at the town of Komenda in the polity of Eguafo. Since ousting the Portuguese from nearby Elmina in 1637, the Dutch WIC had seen itself as entitled to a monopoly on the gold trade from both Komenda and Elmina. They signed a treaty to that effect with the "king" of Eguafo in the 1670s and again in 1688.[123] In spite of any written or oral agreements with the Dutch, however, traders at Komenda continued to trade with ships of other nations, including the main Dutch rival—England. A Dutch trader's account dated 1670 describes how "Commany Blacks" often quarreled with the Dutch because the Komenda leaders had, "sold the beaches of the entire Kingdom" to the Dutch but nevertheless allowed the English and French to build lodges on the beach.[124] The Dutch tried repeatedly to enforce their monopoly through violence and intimidation, even killing the Eguafo king and some of his elders during a war campaign in 1687–88.[125]

In 1694 the Dutch director-general, Staphorst, attempted to hire or bribe the armed forces of several polities in the region, including the inland states of Twifo and Cabesterra/Etsi, to attack Komenda on behalf of the Dutch.[126] This aggressive action on the part of the Dutch put into motion a series of diplomatic negotiations that created wartime alliances involving all of the polities between Ahanta and Acron, as well as the inland states of Twifo, Cabesterra, Abrem and Denkyira. The English Royal African Company naturally came to the defense of Komenda (to protect their trading interests there against a Dutch monopoly) and secured through payment

the assistance of soldiers from Borbor Fante, Asebu, and Acron.[127] The Dutch mobilized soldiers from Twifo and Cabesterra and ensured the neutrality of Denkyira. The fighting continued until 1701 with intense involvement by the Dutch and English, and Komenda was rocked again by civil wars in Eguafo in 1704.[128] These wars, which mobilized fighting men across the central coast, did not result in significant political change or territorial appropriation except within the town of Komenda itself. Coastal and hinterland polities became involved because they could acquire trade goods from the European companies by doing so, and this strengthened their intermediary position.

The coastal polities were interested in securing an intermediary role in the gold trade, and this repeatedly led to war. Thomas Phillips, who was on the coast in 1694, described how Fetu merchants thus began a conflict with Akany (Assin):

> The Arcanys . . . were oblig'd to pass thro' the territories of other princes with their gold to buy, and back with the commodities purchas'd; which tho' very troublesome because of the distance, yet they underwent it with great alacrity. Among others they were to pass thro' the king of Futto's country, which they did for some time without interruption; but at length the Futtoers designing to make a prety [*sic*] of the Arcanys (instigated by our no-friends the Dutch at the Mine-castle) refus'd them passage thro' their country to our castles and ships, but would force them to buy the goods from them at their own rates . . . so that both they and we suffer'd by this obstruction; and the Futtoers would, upon refusal of the Arcanys to deal with them, abuse the traders, and plunder them of their gold. This treatment the Arcanys so far stomach'd and resented, that some of their principal merchants resolv'd to unite together with lives and fortunes to reduce the king of Futto to justice. To effect which they made war against him.[129]

The conflict between Akani and Fetu over restrictions and taxation on gold caravans erupted in an Akani attack on Fetu in 1694, in the midst of the Komenda Wars.

Warfare on the coast prompted coastal polities to engage in alliances. As Phillips's account shows, both sides raised large fighting forces for this conflict.

> The Arcanys pursued their resolutions to raise an army; and, to render it the more formidable, hired the king of Sabo [Asebu] and his subjects into their service. . . . The Arcanys joyn'd by the Saboers, and several Cape Corce [Cape Coast] negroes our chief merchants sent to assist them, under the command of captain Hansico, captain Amo, and others of the castle cappashiers [caboceers], made an army up of 20,000 blacks, and marched directly against the king of Futto, who, for defence of his country, had raised much such another army.[130]

What distinguishes these late seventeenth century wars on the coast from those occurring in the interior of the Gold Coast at the same time is that the goal of the coastal wars was to gain control of gold-trading routes and markets—not to gain territories. Wealth accumulated by merchants in the gold trade, and credit established by them, was used to hire armies to pursue control of trade routes. The leaders of the Borbor Fante polity received numerous large payments from both the English and the Dutch, as both European powers attempted to harness the support of what was by then the strongest military force on the coast.[131] These payments supported the ongoing military campaigns and allowed the Borbor Fante to increase their influence in the gold trade without conquering territories that could then be taxed for tribute payments.

At the turn of the century, the political structure of the coastal polities remained as it had been in the mid-seventeenth century—centered around royal families and a "king" figure. The Europeans concluded that their efforts to affect coastal politics had been in vain: "the concerning ourselves in the succession of their kings, on suspicion they may be more inclined to the Dutch interest than ours" could not have been "done to less purpose on either side," wrote one English officer.[132] For the African armies and those who paid them to fight, the goals of these wars were the destruction of competing rulers, pillage, and ultimately greater influence in the gold trade. Even as kings of coastal polities were murdered and towns completely plundered, invading forces usually allowed political authority to remain in the hands of local people in this period.

The impact of competition for the gold trade in the seventeenth century differed notably from the impact of competition for the slave trade in the century that followed. For coastal elites in the seventeenth century, warfare was a means of securing control of trade routes and simultaneously accruing booty. By contrast, wars in the eighteenth century would result in fundamental changes in the configuration of political power in the coastal region because the slave trade and the rise of the Asante Kingdom created new challenges to territorial sovereignty. Competition for gold continued to cause wars among the coastal states well into the eighteenth century, even as the transatlantic slave trade burst onto the economic scene.[133] But the very different conditions occasioned by the growth of major Atlantic slave markets on the coast soon began to change the regional context within which wars between coastal states took place after 1700.

Transition to the Slave Trade

With the exception of one Portuguese vessel that carried a hundred captives from Africa to the Americas in 1619, the transatlantic slave trade did not draw its victims from the port towns of Ghana prior to 1641 (except, on a limited

scale, from the eastern Gold Coast). By then, the overall trade from Africa was averaging more than twelve thousand captives brought to the Americas annually.[134] Even after slavers began to collect captives from the Gold Coast toward the middle of the seventeenth century, the Atlantic slave trade from Ghana remained small in comparison to the neighboring Slave Coast (modern-day Togo, Benin, Nigeria, and Cameroon) and the West Central African coast (modern-day Congo and Angola) in the seventeenth century, as table 1.1 shows.[135]

As England became more involved in the transatlantic slave trade in the second half of the seventeenth century, English slaving ships began to disregard the Dutch policy of preserving Gold Coast ports exclusively for the gold trade. By the 1690s English slave traders had demonstrated that the slave trade on the Ghana coast could be more profitable than the gold trade.[136] Thereafter, Ghana's slave trade developed rapidly and supplied slaving ships of several nationalities.[137] Noting the sudden proliferation of slave trading on the Ghana coast, the director-general of the Dutch West Indies Company wrote from Elmina in 1705 that what had formerly been known as a place for gold trading had become mainly a slave market. He explained, "Although we have given out of our own pocket—and to the decline of our own means—20 bendas of gold for the continuation of the Trade . . . this has not made the gold trade any more prosperous."[138]

Perhaps the most striking marker of the transition from an era of gold trading to an era of slave trading in southern Ghana is the huge jump in the volume of the Atlantic slave trade there between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and first quarter of the eighteenth century. According to recent figures, the slave trade from Ghana (Gold Coast) more than tripled in volume in that period, as shown in tables 1.2 and 1.3.

These statistics suggest an astonishing leap in the average number of captives departing from the Ghana coast, from two thousand to more than seven thousand annually. While the violence and inhumanity that must have accompanied an annual export of two thousand enslaved people from the region is not insignificant (either for the societies from which those captives came or for the captives themselves), the second number—seven thousand annually—suggests a state of affairs in which violence and slavery had permeated the area. A large-scale internal slave trade—the "supply" end of the transatlantic slave trade—must have been developed very rapidly during the early 1700s to make this increase possible.

The explosion in the volume of Ghana's slave trade between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century is unmatched elsewhere in Africa, where the slave trade developed at a more gradual pace. As shown in table 1.2, the dawn of the eighteenth century brought an expansion of slave trading all along the West and West Central African coast, but nowhere else did the volume increase as much and as quickly as it did on the Gold Coast.

Table 1.1. Estimated regional departures of captives as part of total Atlantic trade, 1626–1700

	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	West Central Africa and St. Helena	Total Atlantic slave trade
1626–50	2,429	6,080	241,269	315,050
1651–75	30,806	52,768	278,079	488,064
1676–1700	75,377	207,436	293,340	719,674

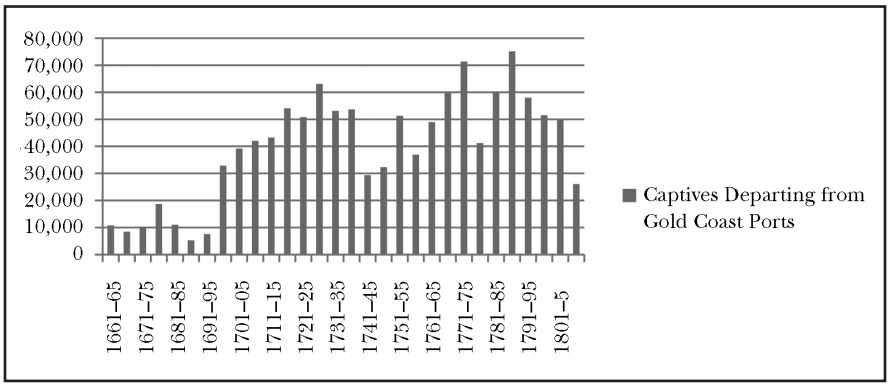
Source: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

Table 1.2. Estimated regional departures of captives from African ports, 1676–1725

Senegambia	Sierra Leone	Windward Coast	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra	West Central Africa	SE Africa	Total	
1676–1700	54,100	4,600	1,000	75,400	207,400	69,000	293,300	14,700	719,700
1701–25	55,900	6,600	8,900	229,200	378,100	66,800	331,200	12,100	1,088,900
Total	110,100	11,200	9,900	304,600	585,500	135,900	624,500	26,900	1,808,600

Source: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

Table 1.3. Volume of the Gold Coast slave trade, 1661–1805



Source. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

In part because of the manner in which the Atlantic slave system absorbed southern Ghana, then, the transition from gold trading to slave trading represented much more than an economic shift from one export commodity to another. For the people of southern Ghana, this was the most significant turning point in their history since the beginning of the trans-Saharan trade in gold from this region brought them into contact with the cultures of the Western Sudan in the early part of the second millennium CE. As elsewhere in West and West Central Africa, full incorporation into the Atlantic slave system marked the end of an era in southern Ghana. As scholars such as Paul Lovejoy, Patrick Manning, and Sylviane Diouf have shown, the expansion of slave trading was always associated with fundamental changes not only in the economies but also in the social structures of African societies.[139] The act of enslavement itself inherently involved an act of violence and a threat to the stability of the household and community from which the enslaved person was taken.[140] Moreover, the seizure of human beings created even more cause for warfare and other forms of conflict among coastal and inland groups than had existed in the era of the Atlantic gold trade.

Considering the rapid progression of slaving on Ghana's coast, it is not surprising that the early eighteenth century witnessed dramatic changes in the social and political organization of southern Ghana's inhabitants. While slavery and slave trading were not new to the area, the enormity of human trafficking that seized southern Ghana at the outset of the eighteenth century could hardly have been imagined by people living in the era of the gold trade. Within a few decades the Ghana coast became a place where every human being had a cash value and tall ships were poised to sweep up anyone unlucky enough to lose his or her freedom. This rapid expansion of slave trading shocked the social order and sparked a reconfiguration of relationships of dependency in the eighteenth century.

The political map changed dramatically as well. By the mid-1700s two competing polities would claim the allegiance of all the people inhabiting what is now central and southern Ghana: the Asante Kingdom and the Coastal Coalition. All of the small polities that had functioned autonomously during the era of the gold trade became dependents of one of these two entities.

Conclusion

The era of the gold trade on Ghana's coast (roughly 1470–1700) was the starting point for a number of significant processes of change that had tremendous impact on the development of coastal societies in the following century, during the era of the slave trade (roughly 1700–1807). Briefly put, the Gold Coast appeared, literally and figuratively, on the map of the Atlantic World during the era of the gold trade. But unlike the other African ports on that map, the Gold Coast primarily represented a source of gold, not captive human beings, to investors and traders in other parts of the Atlantic World—for the time being. European trade on the Gold Coast between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries stimulated the development of seaside markets and attracted Akan-speaking people to the coast, whether for trade, as in the case of the Akani caravan traders, or for permanent settlement, as in the case of the Borbor Fante. The expansion of the gold trade in the second half of the seventeenth century and the heightened level of competition among European traders of several nationalities spawned the first generation of merchant elites on the coast and set the coastal polities against each other in wars for control of trade. For the first time, commerce on the coast began to eclipse the centuries-old trade with the Western Sudan.

In many respects, southern Ghana resembled other West African regions prior to the eighteenth century in terms of political, economic, and social structure during the era of the gold trade. To the east, the Anlo-Ewe, Fon, and Yoruba people were mostly organized into small-scale societies that competed for access to trade with the Western Sudan and, eventually, for trade with Europeans on the coast. Far to the northwest, the societies of the Senegambia region shared southern Ghana's experience of urbanization in response to long-distance gold trade, although the goldfields of Bambuk and Bure were nearly depleted by the trans-Saharan trade before the arrival of European traders on the coast.

Gold Coast people were integrated into the Atlantic World in the context of the gold trade—not the full-fledged slave trade. Because of the unique way Gold Coast merchants, workers, and political authorities entered into the Atlantic system, they were able to develop commercial and diplomatic skills for Atlantic trade without simultaneously succumbing to

the widespread violence that accompanied the slave trade. For more than two hundred years, in the context of a gold-oriented Afro-European trade on the coast, Africans participating in Atlantic trade on the Gold Coast accumulated a set of skills that gave them an advantage—compared to other coastal African societies—in dealing with the conditions that would come with the full-fledged Atlantic slave trade. When the slave trade did finally eclipse the gold trade on the Gold Coast around 1700, the coastal population was able to chart a path toward sovereignty and unity in a way that was not possible elsewhere in Atlantic Africa.

2

Fanteland in the Atlantic World

> The solitary traveler was no longer safe. The hunter who had wandered too far from home in pursuit of game, the farmer on his secluded farm, women going to market or to the spring were ruthlessly captured and sold into foreign slavery.
>
> —John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*

This chapter explores the principal consequences of the incorporation of Fanteland (the coast between the Pra River and Accra) into the transatlantic slave trade in the eighteenth century. It should be stated from the outset that any trade in human captives, and indeed slavery itself, is reprehensible. It would be inappropriate and inaccurate to suggest that the transatlantic slave trade was a boon to any African population. Nevertheless, a variety of conditions that were created by the slave trade opened up opportunities for economic growth and state formation in southern Ghana, and these developments must be included in any serious analysis of southern Ghana's history. This chapter seeks to explain how the coastal population made the transatlantic trade work to its advantage, bearing in mind that the effects of the trade were filtered and spread through a prism of regional and local conditions. The ports of Cape Coast, Elmina, Accra, and Anomabo were truly "Atlantic" ports, where local circumstances were unique but regional and transatlantic developments shaped everyday life.[1]

The people known as the Fante of the Gold Coast had a distinct reputation in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. European traders knew them as a people well-practiced in Atlantic trade. On one hand, Fantes were sought after as workers in African ports and aboard slave ships because of their knowledge and experience in transatlantic commerce.[2] On the other hand, these same African people were regarded by Europeans as notorious swindlers, able to use their knowledge of Atlantic commercial practices to deceive foreign traders. One British agent summarized this view, commenting that "the leopard may change his spots but no Fante Man can be otherwise than a villain."[3] Whether it was a quality that cast them in an attractive or sinister light, the people known as Fantes in the eighteenth century

clearly demonstrated their mastery of international commerce in the era of the slave trade. The Atlantic creoles of the Ghana coast, schooled for generations in the international gold trade, conducted trade and diplomacy in particular ways that established and perpetuated this reputation for exploiting Atlantic trade. These commercial and diplomatic techniques are the focal points of this chapter.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first explores the main characteristics of the slave trade on Ghana's coast. Central themes include (1) the expansion of the slave trade on the Gold Coast and in the hinterland, (2) the unique impact of the forts and castles—left over from the era of the gold trade—on the developing slave trade, and (3) the rivalry between English and Dutch traders (especially England's Royal African Company and its successor, the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa; and the Dutch West Indies Company). The second section focuses more narrowly on the principal slave market, Anomabo. Disputes and negotiations between Anomabo's political authorities and agents of the English trading company illustrate the day-to-day techniques by which coastal elites turned the Atlantic slave trade to their advantage.

This chapter deals with the economic history of southern Ghana in the eighteenth century but is not meant to be a comprehensive treatment of that subject. While the economy of the Gold Coast was certainly affected in many ways by the development of the transatlantic slave trade, most of the productive labor of the people in the region took the form of farming, as it had during the gold-trade era and for centuries prior. Along the coast the labor of fishing continued to be a mainstay of productivity. Significant quantities of food produced by Africans in southern Ghana were sold to meet the demands for provisions aboard slave ships and in the European forts on the coast—especially a grain known as "millie" but also fruits, peppers, plantains, sweet potatoes, yams, various beans, palm wine, palm oil, livestock (including cattle, goats, pigs, and poultry), and fish.[4] The majority of food production, however, was for local consumption. It would be a mistake to conclude, therefore, that the central economic activity of the eighteenth century was slave trading. This chapter explains the growth of slave trading as a dimension of the Gold Coast economy and suggests how the effects of it reverberated through the political and cultural life of southern Ghana's population. The political and cultural implications are explored further in chapters 3 and 4.

Volume, Chronology, and Geographic Dimensions

Southern Ghana became fully integrated into the Atlantic slave trade suddenly, between roughly 1700 and 1725. Those years also mark the maturation of what Philip Curtin dubbed the "plantation complex" in the Western

Figure 2.1. View of Cape Coast Castle from the sea. Photograph by author, 2001.

Hemisphere.[5] By 1700 massive sugar plantations that relied on slave labor had been developed in European colonies in Brazil and the Caribbean Islands. The growth of new markets for enslaved Africans in the North Atlantic (especially the Caribbean) in the mid- to late 1600s fueled the enslavement and sale of captives from the Gulf of Guinea—from modern-day Ghana to Cameroon—whereas the Atlantic slave trade had previously focused on the South Atlantic and areas most accessible to Brazil: West Central Africa (Angola and Kongo).[6]

Until recently, the relative importance of the Gold Coast in the Atlantic slave trade was underestimated. The enslaved Africans embarking from the Gold Coast were thought to constitute only about 6 percent of the total trade between 1470 and 1880, but now their numbers appear to have been closer to 12 percent, or 1,209,000 people.[7] According to the slave trade database, the British were dominant in the overall Gold Coast slave trade, sponsoring 81 percent of the voyages that were recorded as trading or intending to trade on the Gold Coast.[8] The major destination for enslaved people from the Gold Coast was Jamaica, which accounted for 36 percent of arrivals (about 352,000 people). A similar number went to other parts of the British Americas, so that two-thirds of all captives embarking from Gold Coast, or about 705,000 people, disembarked in the British Caribbean. The third most common destination was Spanish America, which was the point of disembarkation for 15 percent of the captives who embarked from the Gold Coast.

A distinctive feature of Ghana's trade is that the volume remained relatively constant throughout the eighteenth century, whereas the overall trade from Africa showed a definite increase in volume from 1700 to the 1780s.

On the Gold Coast, the slave trade was concentrated in a small area. Between 1662 and 1863, Cape Coast and Anomabo were the sites of 76 percent of departures. When Elmina is included in the calculation, an estimated 82 percent departed from one of these three towns (36 percent from Anomabo, 26 percent from Cape Coast, and 21 percent from Elmina).[9]

Expansion of Slave Trading: Coast and Hinterland

The most obvious difference between Ghana's slave trade and that of other parts of Atlantic Africa is that the trade began and ended relatively abruptly on Ghana's coast. Unlike the pattern of slave embarkations from most African ports, where the volume of human trafficking gradually increased from the 1650s to 1770s at the same pace as the rising demand for slaves in the Americas, slave departures from the Gold Coast jumped suddenly in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Over the course of one or two generations, acts of enslavement increased dramatically, and the population of southern Ghana witnessed an unprecedented level of violence along their roads, in their market centers, and beyond.

Rapid expansion in the volume of the slave trade was always accompanied (and made possible) by the enslavement of new categories of people, as Paul Lovejoy has shown.[10] In other words, people accustomed to a degree of peace and security had to become vulnerable to enslavement for the volume of the slave trade to increase in a short period of time. At the height of the transatlantic slave trade, one English agent working on the Gold Coast observed that with the right assortment of trade goods, one could, "bring slaves almost out of the bowell [*sic*] of the earth."[11] Of course, the human beings who were bound, branded, and forced aboard a slave ship were not drawn from the bowels of the earth but from homes, families, and villages. They were not slaves, but young adults—and in many cases children—enslaved for the profit they could bring slave merchants.

In southern Ghana and the surrounding region, the risk of enslavement came in many forms in the early eighteenth century. Primary threats included capture in the Asante wars of expansion, *panyarring* (seizure of goods or people), and judicial enslavement. Beginning in the late 1600s, the newly formed union of Asante began to conquer neighboring polities in the area around Kumase. The first major territorial conquest occurred in 1701, after three years of warfare, when Osei Tutu was able to claim victory over the Kingdom of Denkyira.[12] The defeat of Denkyira not only turned the Asante people from a tribute-paying territory into a tribute-collecting

kingdom, it also gave them control of long-distance trading routes that were critical in the trade of gold and slaves in the region. It made the Asante nominal overlords of Denkyira's former tributary states of Akani, Wassa, Twifo, and Aowin, which were required to begin paying tribute in gold and slaves and supplying soldiers to Asante.

The rise of Asante has been attributed to the personal leadership qualities and military victories of Osei Tutu, but the economic motives were also important. The Atlantic slave trade appears as a minor side note in John K. Fynn's *Asante and Its Neighbors* and, more recently, Tom McCaskie's *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante*.[13] Yet the Atlantic economy in general and the Atlantic slave trade in particular created a set of conditions that fundamentally shaped the development of the Asante Kingdom. Much like the neighboring Dahomey Kingdom, the Asante Kingdom of the eighteenth century obtained a significant portion of its wealth and labor power from the capture and coercion of people into slavery and the sale of many of these captives into the Atlantic slave trade.[14] While the Asante Kingdom did not acquire political dominance in the region until around 1750, its commercial dominance along most of the inland trade paths leading to the coast was secured early in the eighteenth century. The expansion of Asante under the second Asantehene (king of Asante), Opoku Ware (1720–50), "secured complete control of the gold, ivory and slave resources in the interior of the Gold Coast," for the Asante elite, according to Fynn.[15] The reputation of Asante was stated clearly by John Atkins, an Englishman who was on the Gold Coast in 1721: "They are as fearless as any of the Colour, both in Trade and War."[16]

When the Asantes waged wars in the eighteenth century, they not only built a new state (which has been the primary concern of most scholars of Asante), they also killed people, enslaved people, destabilized societies by removing political authorities, and established obligatory tribute payments that the conquered groups were obliged to pay, in part, by enslaving more people. Of particular note are the Asante conquests of Banda and Dagomba in the northern region; Tekyiman, Gyaman, Sefwi, and Twifo in the west; and Akyem, Kwahu, Akwapim, Akwamu, and Accra in the southeast. As Carl Reindorf later remarked, "Most of the best kings and chiefs as well as the greater part of the population had been crushed and brought over to Asante as captives for life."[17] The wars of expansion were made possible by the sale of captives. As Kwame Arhin argues, "War-captives were exchanged for armament; conquered peoples paid indemnities in gold and men; and the gains from annual tributes, payable in men or produce of the land, replenished the treasury. . . . The economics of warfare changed after the abolition of the slave trade, when it was no longer easy to dispose of war captives or human tribute."[18] Asante warfare was virtually continuous from the formation of the kingdom through the 1770s, during which time many of the captives sold to Europeans on the coast were prisoners taken in Asante wars.[19]

During this period and thereafter, "tribute" slaves also constituted a large portion of slaves sold at Asante-Fante border markets and, subsequently, on the coast.[20] Asante sustained its power throughout the eighteenth century largely by demanding taxes and tribute from conquered populations in the form of slaves.[21] The economy of the Asante Kingdom in the eighteenth century was supported to a large extent by the collection of booty and tribute from subject states. Tribute was collected in the form of slaves and gold.[22] Overall, wealth in Asante primarily consisted of slaves, gold, and kola.[23]

The Asante Kingdom waged a particularly disruptive series of wars in the 1740s under Opoku Ware. During his reign, Asante acquired territory in two areas that were essential links in Ghana's Atlantic slave trade: the lands connecting Asante with the seaside town of Accra, and the militarily weak Islamic polities in what is now northern Ghana.[24] Accra's value as a port of Atlantic trade had attracted the interest of other inland states prior to the Asante takeover. Akwamu conquered Accra in 1681 and ruled it until 1730, when Akyem combined forces with internal revolters in Akwamu to oust Akwamu from the coast. Accra was under the rule of Akyem for little more than a decade. In 1742 Akyem was defeated and Asante incorporated Akyem and Accra into its empire. Asante controlled Accra from 1742 to the mid 1820s.[25] Accra remained a secondary port in the slave trade compared to Anomabo, Cape Coast, and Elmina, but it was the headquarters of the Danish slave trade and the road between Accra and Asante remained a vital artery of trade between Asante and Europeans throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.[26]

Asante wars also fueled the Atlantic slave trade by forcing people to flee their homes and become refugees. On occasion, large bodies of armed men marched into villages or towns with the sole purpose of taking as many war captives as possible. The majority of the people under attack in such a situation fled for protection. Some of the people living near the sea fled by canoe. These refugees often became another major source of slaves for the Atlantic trade, however, since those to whom they fled for protection could easily enslave them. As Governor White wrote following a later Asante war, "Hundreds of men, women and children were carried up to the Ashantee country; some were sold to the ships and traders, and many have been sacrificed at the several customs made by the king, for relations and principal men killed in the war."[27]

The gold trade and slave trade were intertwined and became layered atop one another in the eighteenth century. Coastal traders were "commissioned" by inland merchants to get particular goods, which the latter paid for in gold. If the coastal traders were able to obtain the goods desired by the inland merchants by selling the human captives with which they had been commissioned, they could then pocket the gold and use it to buy items that could then be exchanged for more captives with which to continue their trade, as described in the correspondence of the English trading company:

> When the upcountry people hear of any trader or number of traders coming down to the Waterside, they each of them for what he wants give those traders their gold to lay out for them. . . . The trader, when he comes to the Waterside, endeavours to get as many articles of his Commissions as he possibly can on the sale of his slaves, by which means so much of the gold becomes his property. This then he lays out for such articles as will do best for himself and [which] he possibly could not get on his slaves.[28]

In addition to warfare, various kinds of banditry escalated in the era of the slave trade. Some of these practices had their roots in the era of the gold trade.[29] The proliferation in the eighteenth century of a practice known as *panyarring* reveals how the inhumane acts associated with the Atlantic slave trade effected changes in a basic social practice in southern Ghana and how this combination created a security crisis among coastal populations. A common term in the eighteenth-century literature regarding the Gold Coast, to panyar literally means to seize or capture. The term appears to be Portuguese in origin, derived from the term *penhóràr*, to distrain or seize. It is also related to the Portuguese noun *penhór*, meaning a pawn, pledge, or surety.[30] In the days of the Portuguese monopoly on the coast (c. 1470–1630), the term *penhóràr* would have been used by Portuguese observers to describe the local African practice whereby a creditor could temporarily detain a person, or "pawn," from a debtor's household as collateral for repayment of a debt. The practice of pawnship—common throughout Atlantic Africa—was a carefully regulated institution through which a trader handed over family members or other dependents to be held as a sort of collateral in the advance of credit.[31] Pawns were, in theory, meant to be held as free persons and returned to the provider upon repayment of the debt incurred.

By the eighteenth century, however, European accounts of commercial activity on the Gold Coast refer more commonly to "panyarring," a practice that bears some similarity to pawnship but involves far less security for the person held as collateral. To panyar someone was to seize him or her as a form of human collateral, the primary difference being that, unlike pawnship, panyarring was initiated by the self-proclaimed "creditors," not arranged by debtors. Panyarring was also used as a form of initiating a *palaver*, or dispute—the panyarred person was taken as a hostage to be returned only when a grievance had been settled.

Like pawnship, panyarring was mutually practiced and understood by Europeans and Africans. Panyarring became a central component of the system by which company traders advanced credit to Africans during the slave trade. As David Mill explained in 1775,

> "Every Dutch or English Chief makes a practice of trusting & selling the Blacks goods just as conveniency suits [?] him without regarding whether the people

> who take them are his Subjects or not; and in case of not receiving payment, makes no scruple of panyarring; thus the General at Elmina will sell or trust Goods to a Cape Coast man and panyar if not paid, & vice versa. I would do the same. I have been Chief of two of our Forts where we have Dutch Neighbours, & never saw but the practice was always used."[32]

European traders panyarred Africans as retaliation for various grievances. Frustrated at watching African traders at Anomabo carrying on trade with private ships rather than his own company ship, one Captain Foot panyarred some canoemen (and their canoes) in the waters off Anomabo in 1715.[33] In another example in 1797, Archibald Dalzel panyarred a Fante priest when some Fantes refused to repay debts owed to deceased English company servants. Dalzel held the priest captive at Cape Coast Castle a week until the chief of Anomabo, Amonu Kuma, personally guaranteed repayment of the debts and convinced Dalzel to return the prisoner.[34]

European traders, too, were sometimes panyarred by Africans. For example, in 1709, one private trader named Captain Brethaver was panyarred by Fantes at Anomabo. A dispute had erupted over the sale of a slave who was determined to be "mad." The officer of the English fort at Anomabo was forced to intervene to have Brethaver released.[35]

The Dutch and English trading companies incorporated panyarring into their competitive strategies against each other. When the two companies were engaged in a heated dispute, each was ready to panyar Africans who were considered to be loyal to the other company.[36] A similar practice on a larger scale occurred in some disputes between African states, when people from one state would be panyarred and held as surety until the interstate dispute was resolved.[37]

Observing the prevalence of unlawful seizure of people—as opposed to pawning—the Dutch director-general Hieronimus Haring wrote in 1714 that trade on the coast was disrupted by, "the kidnapping of people which is becoming so common that no Negro whether free or slave dares pass, without assistance, from one place to another."[38] Remarking on this practice around the coast's busiest slave market, Sir Dalby Thomas, the English governor of the time, wrote in 1709 that "the Anomabos panyar all the people they can."[39]

In the context of the Atlantic slave trade, the distinctions between pawnship, panyarring, and outright kidnapping became blurred. The people buying slaves on the coast did not discriminate between captives taken through legitimate pawnship or panyarring procedures and those seized by force. With slavers constantly weighing anchor off the Gold Coast, if someone ashore had the ability—by force or otherwise—to seize a person, regardless of any prior financial relationship, he could be sure of a ready buyer. This was particularly true on and near the coast, where victims could be captured

and sold aboard a ship in a short time, minimizing the chances for the victim's kin or townspeople to seek justice.

Creditors and debtors sometimes entered into business arrangements using pawnship or other forms of collateral to secure debts but later resorted to panyarring and selling hostages to slave ships when negotiations broke down. A dispute involving a man named Quamino Affery in 1776, for instance, began when Affery lent gold to a man from Komenda. When the gold was not repaid on time, Affery panyarred four people from Komenda. These four people were redeemed, but their capture initiated another dispute that resulted in the seizure of Affery's brother, who was sold to a man named Mr. Dixon and shipped off the coast before Affery could pay for his release.[40] Affery proceeded to panyar two more men and threatened to sell them for guns and powder with which to avenge the loss of his brother.

While warfare and banditry created pervasive violence throughout the region, then, the practices of panyarring and kidnapping enveloped the coastal and near-coastal communities in an atmosphere of extreme vulnerability for anyone traveling or working alone or in small numbers. It is impossible to determine what proportion of the enslaved Africans who were sold on the Ghana coast in the eighteenth century lost their freedom through an act of panyarring—as opposed to capture during war, for example—but surely the effects of this practice on the daily lives of coastal people necessitated the development of more effective social institutions that could protect people in every town and village. The main responses to this need—asafo companies and the shrine of Nananom Mpow—are discussed in chapter 4.

Forts and Castles

The transatlantic slave trade operated under a different set of conditions along the coast of Ghana than elsewhere in Africa, largely because of the presence of numerous forts and castles that were left over from the era of the gold trade. Although European trade elsewhere in precolonial Africa did sometimes involve the use of forts, those on the Gold Coast were unique because they were designed and built for the gold trade, not the slave trade. Almost all of the other forts built by Europeans in Africa were located on islands, of which Gorée (off the coast of Senegal) is probably the most famous. Europeans generally did not leave these islands to conduct trade, preferring the relative safety from attack offered by separation from the mainland. On the Gold Coast, however, Atlantic commerce involved close interaction between Africans and Europeans from its beginning. There are no islands off the coast large enough for fortification. Moreover, the gold

trade did not involve the extent of violence associated with the slave trade, so the forts on the coast were hardly threatened by African attack in the seventeenth century.[41]

In addition to their respective headquarters at Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle, the English and Dutch maintained European staff at several other port towns. The most significant English outposts were at Dixcove, Sekondi, Komenda, Tantumquerry, Winneba, Anomabo (after 1751), and Accra. The principal Dutch outposts were at Axim, Takoradi, Sekondi, Shama, Komenda, Mouri, Kromantse, Apam, and Accra. There was also a French fort at Amoku for a short period of time.[42] For reasons that made more sense in the broader context of European empire building in the Atlantic than in the local context of the Gold Coast slave trade, European governments remained committed to occupying the forts and castles even when they were draining the companies' revenues.

The forts served many of the same purposes in the slave trade as they had done in the era of the gold trade: they provided a residence for the company employees who administered trade in Africa and for a small number of soldiers and sentries from Europe, and they provided a place to conduct business with African sellers and with captains of slavers.[43] In addition, the storage rooms that were built to store goods brought to Africa to trade for gold were converted into slave dungeons, where captives purchased by the company were held—sometimes for months on end—until a slaver took them away. Perhaps most importantly for European political authorities, the forts were considered valuable markers of their company's ongoing trade at particular places on the African coast.

The forts and castles were meant to impress upon both African and European customers the company's local influence, but the reality of the slave trade on the Gold Coast was that trade was driven by profits and little else—certainly not Africans' loyalty to the European nations to which the inhabitants of forts belonged. Both African and European sellers offered their goods to the highest bidders, and both African and European buyers sought out brokers offering the lowest price. The kind of influence that could be imposed by flying a flag was fleeting. Rather, as Per Hernæs has suggested, the relationship between Europeans and Africans on the coast of Ghana was an "open interactive system," where both African and European communities strategized for the greatest gain.[44]

In the day-to-day operation of the slave trade on the Gold Coast, the forts actually exposed European companies to unnecessary risks and expenses. Unlike the gold trade, profitability in the Atlantic slave trade was not at all certain.[45] Investors in slaving faced enormous risks because of high mortality rates among crews and human cargos, particularly during the Middle Passage across the Atlantic. The expenses associated with maintaining forts frequently exceeded revenues from the slave trade on

the Gold Coast, damaging both the company's profits and those of individual traders.[46] Particularly in the 1730s, costs exceeded profits and the English company was unable to pay its employees' salaries.[47]

The inhabitants of the forts depended almost entirely on the local African population for the necessities of life. Fresh water, food, and firewood had to be obtained locally, since company ships carried only enough of these provisions for their own maintenance and indeed relied on the company posts to replenish their supplies.[48] The residents of company forts also depended on the local population for communication with their counterparts at other forts. Letters were carried by sea between the forts, and the only people skilled enough to navigate the rough coastal waters by canoe were the local Africans who had been fishing these waters for centuries.[49] Forts were also havens for deserters from the crews of slave ships, owing to the close proximity of forts represented by various nations.[50] And because of financial constraints, the forts always lacked sufficient soldiers to enforce company regulations. Even when fully staffed, soldiers were frequently found incapable of performing their duties due to illness or drunkenness.[51]

The council of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa repeatedly ignored its agents on the Gold Coast who urged the closing of forts.[52] Men who spent time on the Ghana coast in the service of the British company were often aware of the futility and expense of the forts. John Roberts considered that, particularly under the reorganization of the company into a committee of merchants, "the settlements upon this coast can never answer the purpose they were erected for."[53] Private traders who established trading operations on the Gold Coast were even more unhappy with the forts, because they depended on them for protection, which was inadequate. One trader named Richard Brew complained publicly that the forts should be abandoned due, in part, to mismanagement.[54] Ship captains, too, viewed the forts as an impediment to trade rather than as an aid. The vast majority of slave-ship captains purchasing captives on the coast of Ghana in the eighteenth century dealt with private traders—both African and European—on the coast, not with the companies in their forts. In the decades when the European companies tried to impose monopolies on trade (especially the 1680s to 1720s), pirates and other interlopers regularly defied these legal restrictions. Even after these restrictions on trade were lifted, traders continued to find that prices were more favorable outside the walls of the forts than within.

For the coastal African elite who controlled the intermediary trade between Asante and the coast, however, the continued use of the forts and castles by European trading companies presented innumerable opportunities for accumulation of wealth and local (African) management of the Atlantic trade. To understand the usefulness of the forts for African elites, it is essential to recognize that the forts were African property as much as

European. They were usually built at the invitation of an African political authority.[55] They could be inhabited by Europeans only as long as they paid rent to the local political authorities.

The English and Dutch administrators of the forts and castles depended on the cooperation of these "Black Men of power," as they called them, in hiring laborers, maintaining supplies of food and water, and conducting their daily business. The African elite demanded fees, or dashees, for their permission to obtain local services. Moreover, the dashees had to meet or exceed those offered by European competitors. Coastal elites regularly raised the amount of the dashees required for services, knowing that the fort inhabitants had little choice but to pay the requested amount. By simply prohibiting fort employees from collecting wood for the forts' use and insisting that all wood be purchased from wood sellers at local markets, for example, local authorities ensured that the forts were lucrative for local people.[56] Even the selection of European personnel to administer the forts could not be done without considering the preferences of the local African population—several European "governors" were dismissed and replaced when local Africans refused to conduct business with them.[57] In Anomabo the African political authorities demonstrated a mastery of this form of exploitation as discussed below.

European Rivalry on the Gold Coast

By the late seventeenth century and throughout the era of the slave trade on the Gold Coast, the Dutch West Indies Company and the English Royal African Company (later reorganized as the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa) owned and operated the majority of the forts on the coast. Competition between these two companies had an enormous impact on the daily practice of the Atlantic slave trade on the Gold Coast. Anglo-Dutch rivalry also shaped the evolving relationship between Asante and the coastal population in profound ways over the course of the eighteenth century. From the point of view of African elites in Cape Coast, Anomabo, and other towns integrated into the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century, the most significant long-term consequence of Anglo-Dutch competition was that it created opportunities to extract money, goods, and services from the English company (and sometimes the Dutch company as well). The English company was forced to continually subsidize coastal African elites because their cooperation—and that of local African workers and soldiers who owed allegiance to those elites—was essential to England's ongoing success in its commercial (and sometimes military) rivalry with Holland.[58]

The Anglo-Dutch rivalry of the eighteenth century was a continuation of the fierce competition among Europeans on the Gold Coast during the

seventeenth century, but with fewer players and with human captives, not gold, as the target. The Danish slave-trading company maintained an active presence on the Ghana coast throughout the eighteenth century, but its commerce, based in Accra and other points to the east of Fanteland, took place on a minor scale compared to that of England and Holland.[59] The Brandenburg African Company also had influential forts to the west of Fanteland (Ahanta) in the early years of the slave trade but sold all of its possessions to the Dutch WIC in 1717.[60] Other nations that had participated in the gold trade on Ghana's coast had abandoned it altogether by the eighteenth century, although some, such as Portugal, Brazil, and France, continued to conduct ship-based trade. From the point of view of African merchants and political elites, competition among European traders was beneficial. A greater number of competing European traders meant a greater variety of trade partners and more opportunities for favorable terms of trade. Kwame Daaku called attention to this in his groundbreaking study of the seventeenth-century trade on the Gold Coast:

> Instead of coming together to present a united front, the Europeans carried on a system of commercial espionage on one another and moved their prices up and down to inconvenience their rivals, which was always to the intense advantage of the Africans.[61]

The rivalry between England and Holland in the eighteenth century likewise ensured a continuation of the advantage for African traders who understood the nature of European competition. And because both nations maintained forts on the coast—some within gunshot of each other—the advantages to savvy African elites was even greater.

Anglo-Dutch relations shifted throughout the early modern era. Holland and England fought three naval wars in the second half of the seventeenth century, during the decades of peak competition for the gold trade. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Netherlands dominated global transoceanic commerce. But on the African coast, England's maritime strength began to seriously challenge that of the Dutch after 1701.[62] In the midst of this rivalry, there were occasional Anglo-Dutch alliances, particularly against Spain and France.

The Gold Coast was a minor yet significant stage on which Anglo-Dutch competition played out in the eighteenth century. Both the English and Dutch nations based the headquarters of their African slave trading operations here—England at Cape Coast and Holland at Elmina. Because of their relative isolation from their home governments and investors, the agents of the English and Dutch companies in West Africa sometimes cooperated with each other for their mutual benefit in spite of political rivalries between their respective nations in Europe.[63] On the other hand, they also attacked

each other openly on the coast at times when their home countries were at peace. Overall, it was unusual for English and Dutch agents or soldiers to openly cooperate. In one instance when soldiers from the two competing castles joined forces to suppress a violent African uprising, an English agent noted that "The Dutch and our joining is very surprizing [*sic*] to the Natives, who did never see the like before."[64] The more familiar sights were of competition between those living under the English flag and those living under the Dutch flag. Both sides challenged the other by seizing forts, capturing ships, making treaties with African authorities and other European traders, and of course trying to dominate the trade.[65]

African traders and political authorities were frequently able to reap short-term gains by dictating the terms of trade to Europeans because they knew that competition among buyers was fierce. In particular, sometimes a European buyer was forced to purchase all slaves that were brought for sale, lest the seller took his trade to another buyer, as noted in the remarks of an agent of the English company:

> For when the UpCountry Traders come down with their trade, in order to give them due encouragement it is necessary to buy all they bring, the bad as well as the good, which if you cannot they will not trade with you provided any one else will.[66]

The most dramatic examples of this form of coercion occurred when African political authorities demanded that the European companies build permanent trading lodges in their towns to promote local trade. As in the case of Anomabo Fort, coastal elites were adept in threatening to do business with a competitor if their demands for a company post were not met.

The coastal elite used a strategy known locally as palavers to maximize their benefits from the European trade—particularly the fort-based trade.[67] When the English company refused to pay the dashees of an African political authority, or was accused of cheating an African trader, company agents would be informed that a palaver had been declared against them. Once involved in a palaver with the local African population, the company usually found itself subjected to even more demands for gifts and fees from all the local African elites than were asked for in the initial transaction. Palavers could last for months or years, depending on the value of the goods in dispute or the severity of the offense committed. Throughout the slave-trade era, Europeans who were familiar with the nature of Gold Coast trade went to great lengths to avoid these costly disputes. As one English trader advised his colleague, "if you are resolved on trade do not pallaver."[68] In short, it was easier to meet the initial terms of trade set by the African elite than to refuse them and try to achieve a fair negotiation by entering into a palaver. European agents based in the forts on the coast were more vulnerable to palavers

than private ship-based traders because the former depended so heavily on the local population for provisions and labor.

Above and beyond these relatively petty forms of exploitation made possible by the Anglo-Dutch rivalry, African political authorities on the central coast (between the Pra River and Accra) developed a long-term relationship with the English company that buttressed the newly formed Coastal Coalition as a governing body and protected their intermediary role in the slave trade. This relationship grew out of a rivalry between England and Holland for the favor of the Asantehene. The chief agents of the English and Dutch companies were keenly aware of the emergence of the Asante Kingdom in the Gold Coast interior at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and their rivalry on the coast began to center on competition for the favor of the Asante king soon thereafter. Both companies pursued friendship with the first Asantehene, Osei Tutu, by sending messengers and gifts immediately upon recognizing his growing power in the forest interior.[69] It was always known that the bulk of trade goods—whether units of gold or ivory or human captives—came from the inland countries beyond the littoral. Once the hinterland came under the yoke of one powerful king, good relations with him obviously became essential for successful trade on the coast. Sir Dalby Thomas emphasized the importance of this friendship in his correspondence with superiors in London, writing in 1709 that "the trade to Ashantee is so important and the King's friendship so valuable that you can't be too generous to the King."[70]

In spite of Thomas's efforts, the Dutch were far more successful in winning the Asantehene's favor. A Dutch emissary, David van Nyendael, was sent to Kumase to win the favor of the Asantehene in 1701, soon after Asante's victory over Denkyira.[71] From the early days of the Asante Kingdom, relations with the Dutch were stronger and more conducive to trade than with the English. A 1708 report from English company agents to their superiors in London noted, "The Dutch have out done you in having a stock of goods which will gain them the trade. They have a bolder way of trading than we; their chiefs send their boys up [to Asante] with goods."[72] The Dutch were a stronger maritime empire in the early 1700s and undoubtedly had higher quality goods and better assortments of them than the English.

The relationship between Asante and the Dutch WIC was strengthened in the 1720s and 1730s and was regularly reinforced thereafter by sending gifts to the Asantehene.[73] The most critical event cementing the relationship between Asante and the Dutch occurred following Asante's 1742 conquest of Accra, including the land on which the Dutch fort (Fort Crevecoeur) stood. The ground rent, or *kostgeld*, which the Dutch company paid for their fort at Accra, was thereafter claimed by the Asantehene.[74] The kostgeld was the stipend allotted to the Asantehene by the Dutch in recognition of his sovereign rights by conquest over the lands occupied by the Dutch fort at Accra. From 1744 on, Asante officials were

permanently positioned at Accra to collect this payment.[75] The presence of the Asantehene's emissaries on the coast enormously strengthened the partnership between the Dutch and Asante for the remainder of the eighteenth century. The Dutch extended credit to Asante elites at Accra, which encouraged their ongoing trade.[76]

Having lost the competition for the Asantehene's favor by the mid-eighteenth century and still competing vigorously with the Dutch WIC for the profits of the slave trade on the Gold Coast, the English company unofficially cast its lot with the main competitors of Asante, the population of the central (Fante) coast. As the coastal people organized a political and commercial alliance for their mutual defense against Asante invasion (the Coastal Coalition), English company administrators came to view the coastal intermediaries as valuable allies. While the Dutch WIC encouraged the Asantehene to invade the coast and eliminate the coastal intermediaries, the English company took the opposite position.[77] From the English company's perspective, Asante rule of the coast would damage English trade because the Dutch would use their partnership with the Asantehene to keep the most lucrative trade for themselves.[78]

The threat of an Asante invasion of the coast was a critical issue in English company policy from the 1740s until Asante armies eventually did conquer the coast in 1807. The first real threat of Asante conquest came in 1742, when the Asante army was reportedly advancing on Agona, to the east of Anomabo.[79] In the 1750s, reports of an imminent Asante invasion of the coast were again made in the English and Dutch correspondence.[80] English governor John Roberts noted "the designs the Dutch had entered into with [Asante] to extirpate all the people at the waterside," and incurred extraordinary expenses to reinforce the company's alliance with African political authorities in Anomabo.[81] As Asante threats on the coast continued in the 1760s, British authorities increasingly committed to a policy of defending the coastal area from an Asante attack.[82] In 1767 the administrators of the English company again noted "the unsettled and critical state of affairs between the King of Ashantee & the Fantees . . . whereby there is great reason to apprehend that the War between these two nations will soon be renewed." They were unanimously of the opinion

> that if the Fantees should be attacked by the King of Ashantee (which they think very probable) the former will be overcome & their enemy by consequence become sole & absolute master of the whole country called the Gold Coast, that is to say, from Cape Appolonia to the River Volta, a Revolution which will entirely change the situation of all the European settlements in the said country

and that

> the English have hitherto been supposed to espouse the cause of the Fantees & as it is known that the Dutch have constantly reported us to the King of Ashantee not only as allies of the Fantees but as declared enemies to him, whom they have from time immemorial sollicited to attempt the conquest of this country

and that

> if this country falls under the dominion of the King of Ashantee, the British settlements here will be in the most eminent danger from the dispositions which we suppose that king to be animated with towards us & the power he will derive from such an event to gratify them.[83]

Finally, in 1772, the company resolved

> that as most of our Forts are situated in the Fantee Country, and that Nation having always lived in friendship with us, we will grant them every assistance in our power consistent with reason, should their Adversaries the Ashantees attack them; this Council being clearly of opinion that the Fantees (a people long used to the manner of the Europeans and pretty much civilized) are as neighbours far preferable to the Ashantees, who are a rude unpolished set of Men, governed by a despotic tyranical Prince, with whom, we might find it very hard (if practicable) to live on any terms. We do not at the same time pretend to interfere in the general war, only to grant assistance to those situated under our Forts, in case they are obliged to retreat under our walls for shelter, which is an act of humanity they have a right to expect from a Nation which they have always preferred to that of every other European who are now or have attempted to settle on this Coast.[84]

The notion that the Asante were "unpolished" and governed by a tyrant surely had more to do with the fact that they allied with the Dutch than any real unwillingness of English agents to conduct trade with them. This was demonstrated in 1807 when, at the onset of Asante's invasion of the coast, the English administrators decided to abandon the Fante altogether, in part because they favored the prospect of direct trade with Asante.[85]

As one officer in the English company explained to his superiors, Asante control of the entire Gold Coast would give the Asantehene too much control over prices:

> the whole Slave Trade being in the hands of a powerful, absolute monarch [the Asantehene], he certainly would put what price he thought proper on slaves and also on our commodities. This will never be the case as long as the Fantees . . . exist.[86]

The English thus opposed the southward expansion of Asante throughout much of the eighteenth century and lent support to coastal armies fighting to preserve their autonomy and their intermediary role in the slave trade.[87]

The relationship that formed between the English company and coastal elites had features of an alliance but was simultaneously fraught with conflict and tension. As Kwame Arhin describes it, the Fante and British engaged in "alternating relations of mutual accommodation and hostility."[88] In the long run, the countless disputes and negotiations that characterized this uneasy alliance enhanced the political power and wealth of the coastal African elite, particularly at Anomabo. Reports from the coast sometimes gave the impression that the English agents there could manipulate the African elite. For instance, one British official noted that, "The way to treat Caboceers [the coastal African political authorities] is to get a power over them, to give a monthly pay, and now and then a present when they merit it; by such procedure, they are always held in a state of vassalage and dependence."[89] Yet other reports from British agents reveal the fact that it was more often the British themselves who were "in a state of vassalage and dependence" on the coastal elite. Governor Weuves described the company's tremendous dependency on local political authorities in a letter to his superiors in 1781:

> That it is necessary from our present weakness to keep Black Men of power in our pay, that through their influence, we may live in peace and amity with the natives who would otherwise molest us, knowing we have not a sufficient force to protect ourselves. . . . That from the list of slaves, at all the out forts, as well as this castle, the committee do not appear to be possessed of a sufficient number of canoemen to transport the necessaries to the several out forts, which are in extent from 350 to 400 miles, therefore that it is impossible to transport the same, without the help of the free Natives, who are paid for their labour according to the several stages they make. . . . That from our weakness in this country, presents and dashes are unavoidable, not only because every other European power settled in it is obliged to do the same, but also in order to keep in good humour the principal Black people, who are in amity with us, and who consider these presents as marks of friendship from us.[90]

This letter reveals the great extent to which the British company was dependent on local African elites, not in a position of "power over them." They had inferior military power compared to African armies in the region, relied heavily on hired African labor, faced steep competition from other European trade interests, and had no choice but to make regular payments to the coastal African elites.

Anomabo, Hub of the Atlantic Slave Trade

The town of Anomabo encompassed the main features of the slave trade on the Gold Coast and can be analyzed as something of a microcosm of the dynamics described earlier. From the initial development of slave trading on the coast to its decline in the early 1800s, Anomabo was a central stage. European forts were a prominent feature of the landscape here—beginning with a Dutch lodge built in the seventeenth century, followed by the English Fort Charles (1672) and the much larger Anomabo Fort (1753)—yet the forts seem to have facilitated African trade more than European trade here, as elsewhere on the coast. Competition between European powers also played into the hands of African elites at Anomabo in critical ways. The history of Anomabo in the era of the slave trade reveals a constant progression of African exploitation of the transatlantic trade. Anomabo became the busiest slave market on the Gold Coast and was home to some of the most influential African political authorities in southern Ghana during the eighteenth century. In addition, the highly consequential relationship between the English trading company and the Coastal Coalition largely played out in and around Anomabo in the form of lengthy negotiations and palavers there.

Development of a Slaving Port

Considering its significance in the Atlantic slave trade, it is surprising how little attention has been paid to Anomabo as a town of historical importance, particularly compared to Elmina and Cape Coast.[91] Anomabo never was the headquarters of a European national trading company; in fact, the enormous fort that stands on the beach at Anomabo was built by the English in the early 1750s, long after the heyday of European fort building in the mid-seventeenth century. Anomabo was instead the main hub of trade on the Gold Coast for the slave trade that took place aboard slaving ships, known as the "boat trade."[92] This type of trade carried far more enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century than did the fort trade.

Prior to the development of Portuguese maritime gold trade on Ghana's coast in the fifteenth century, Anomabo was one of numerous small fishing villages. Anomabo traditions describe the founding and naming of the town in association with a Fante settler who discovered flocks of birds resting on the large black rocks that jut through the waves splashing up against the beach. The name literally means "bird rocks." These rocks were, and are, considered the sacred abode of a goddess in Anomabo traditions; the birds that flock on them in the harmattan season are viewed as her offspring.[93] Borbor Fante settlement at Anomabo is part of the larger tradition of migration, including the adoption or invention of local deities, from the forested interior of Ghana to the coastal area.

Figure 2.2. Anomabo Beach and the "bird rocks," as seen from Anomabo Fort. Photograph by author, 2009.

Anomabo grew from a village to a town in the seventeenth century, as maritime trade with Europe brought new opportunities to the coastal towns of Ghana.[94] Throughout the seventeenth century, the English and Dutch competed for control of this and other coast towns in Ghana, as an extension of their global maritime competition. In 1624 a treaty was signed by the "King of Fanti," promising to "remain annexed" to the Dutch WIC and to "fight all foreign traders" who might interfere with the Dutch trade.[95] Like most treaties signed between European traders and African political authorities in this period, however, this document appears to have had much greater significance and lasting meaning to the Dutch than it did to the Fante king.[96] As evidence of the latter's lack of fidelity, the English Royal Africa Company established a trading operation in the Borbor Fante polity just eight years later, in 1632.[97] Furthermore, the Dutch had to seek formal permission in 1638 to construct a lodge at Anomabo, suggesting the impotence of their 1624 treaty.[98]

The first permanent structure built at Anomabo was variously occupied by Dutch, English, and Swedish trading companies, who traded for foodstuffs, gold, and some slaves in the seventeenth century.[99] In 1679, during a period when the Dutch were preoccupied with wars in Europe, England's Royal African Company invested in the construction of a more substantial trading fort at Anomabo, which they named for Charles II. Fort Charles, as it was called, was occupied by the RAC continuously from the 1680s into the early decades of the 1700s, then abandoned in 1730.[100]

During the seventeenth century, Anomabo was politically subordinate to inland towns and its long-distance trade was handled mainly by Akani caravan traders.[101] Ray Kea estimates that, prior to 1690, Anomabo shared a relatively important commercial role with the other main Atlantic port in the Borbor Fante polity, Kromantse, but that Anomabo was relatively insignificant in terms of its political role.[102] The inland towns of Mankessim (considered the political center of Borbor Fante), Abura, and Kwaman were still the most important administrative centers of the polity. The gold trade at Anomabo had dwindled during the 1680s, and toward the end of the seventeenth century the town was principally viewed by English traders as a place to purchase food provisions for ships.[103] Anomabo was also a base for oyster fishing, which provided shells for making lime—an important material for construction on the coast.[104]

Anomabo transformed from a provisions market and political backwater into a powerful center of slave trafficking and diplomacy (both African and African European) beginning in the 1690s, just as the numbers of enslaved Africans being sold along the coast began to rise sharply. The key to this growth was the persistence of Anomabo merchants and political authorities in limiting English control of the trade from Anomabo while encouraging the boat trade with ships of all nations, including pirate ships.[105]

The Anomabo elite successfully stopped the British from imposing a monopoly on Anomabo's trade throughout the eighteenth century, ensuring Anomabo's role as a commercial lifeline (for weapons, money, and trade goods) for the Borbor Fante polity, and subsequently for the Coastal Coalition. The English went to great lengths to suppress any trade taking place between Africans and Europeans outside of the walls of English forts on the stretch of the Gold Coast between Elmina and Accra. Counteracting this effort was a major strategy, and success, of the coastal African elite in the early eighteenth century.

One reason the Anomabo elite were able to keep the English from controlling trade was because they were so effective in their palavers with the Royal African Company. Already in the 1680s, the Anomabo people exercised a significant degree of control over the operations of the newly constructed Fort Charles. In 1686, 1687, and 1692, the company forcibly removed the administrators of Fort Charles after disputes arose with the townspeople.[106] A slightly later example of what happened when the English tried to regulate trade at Anomabo reveals a continuation of this trend. In response to the English company's trying to suppress the interloper trade at Anomabo in September 1701, the Anomabo townspeople initiated a palaver by breaking open the outer gates of Fort Charles; setting fire to the outer walls and corn room, which had thatched roofs; and firing guns at the castle.[107] Mutual attacks continued for twenty-two days. In another case in 1705, when the *caboceers* (political authorities) of Anomabo claimed that

they had been denied their customs payments from the English, they "arm'd their people" and would not let the factor (chief agent of the fort) return from a visit to Agya until the fees had been paid.[108]

Palavers also arose when the English company attempted to send messengers into hinterland markets behind Anomabo to invite traders to exchange their gold and slaves directly with the RAC rather than selling to Fante intermediaries. One English agent named John Snow explained this practice:

> The misfortune of it is that it had not only no success but did a great deale of harme; for the waterside blacks tooke it presently as a designe to hinder their tradeing, & therefore to be even with the project fell directly into the tenn per cent trade [private trade] and would not sell their slaves till the shipps arrived. . . . In the place of trade nothing but dispute has been the consequence & it is well if nothing worse succeed.[109]

Snow complained that the English policy of forcing Africans to trade only at RAC forts—which forced factors like himself to seize goods from African traders, fire on townspeople, and "brander their persons,"—resulted in lengthy disputes and that these palavers ultimately stifled the company's trade.[110] The culmination of Anomabo leaders' success in suppressing English influence in their town was the total abandonment of Fort Charles by the Royal African Company in 1730.[111]

Aside from initiating palavers with the English, from which gifts and favors could be extracted, the Anomabo elite also exploited the opportunity to conduct trade with the competitors of the English company. They took advantage, in particular, of the growing numbers of noncompany traders who came to the Gold Coast in pursuit of slave trading in the eighteenth century, encouraging the boat trade with private traders and pirates while discouraging fort trade. Anomabo surpassed other Gold Coast port towns in Atlantic trade because it became a port that was open to these noncompany traders, with which the Atlantic trade was teeming after the Royal African Company loosened regulations on trade with Africa in 1698. Between 1698 and 1712 private traders, who came to be known as "Ten Percent men" could trade freely in exchange for a duty of 10 percent on exports.[112] In 1710 Governor Thomas expressed his opinion that the only purpose of maintaining company personnel at Fort Charles in Anomabo was to keep possession of the fort, since the African traders at Anomabo were too involved with the so-called Ten Percent men to allow the RAC agents any influence. He also complained that the activities of the private traders from England had corrupted many of the factors, who were selling slaves to these ships rather than holding them until company ships arrived, since the former offered better prices.[113] John Atkins, who was on the coast in 1721, described the way Anomabo functioned as the main point of Atlantic trade on the coast:

> When a ship has gathered up all this Trade [on the upper guinea coast and down to Anomabo], she makes up the deficiency of her Freight at Anomaboo, three Leagues below Cape Corso, where they constantly stop, and are sometimes two or three Months in finishing. It is a place of very considerable Trade in itself.[114]

Anomabo's growing success in the transatlantic slave trade also attracted traders from Asante. John Atkins noted that a significant amount of Asante's trade came to Anomabo: "There are a numerous people called Santies, or Assanties, extending a long way on the back of [Assinee/Apollonia], who derive a considerable Trade to the Coast, particularly at Anamaboo."[115] The Asante traders' access to Anomabo was limited in subsequent decades, as intermediaries within the Coastal Coalition intercepted that trade at markets in the hinterland.

Agents of the Royal African Company complained throughout the first half of the eighteenth century that the company's trade at Cape Coast Castle was stifled by the flourishing boat trade at nearby Anomabo. In 1708, following their successful war against Asebu, Fetu, and Cabesterra, the Borbor Fante sold most of the captives they had taken to private traders (from England) anchored near Anomabo, in spite of the RAC's sending gifts to appeal to the caboceers to bring their trade to Cape Coast.[116] By 1742, even before Holland strengthened its relationship with Asante by hosting an Asante emissary at Accra, Anomabo's extensive private trade was already depleting the English company's overall trade on the Gold Coast. Rømer noted in the 1740s that Anomabo was where Fante traders preferred to sell slaves:

> After Oppoccu was successful against the Akims in 1742, everyone presumed the same fate would befall the Fantes. All the Europeans and the Blacks under them felt the Fantes deserved it, since they were a thieving and haughty nation. Perhaps the Europeans would have been more kindly disposed towards the Fantes if they had brought the goods they stole to them, as trade, but [instead] they sold their goods directly to ships at Anomabu, concerning themselves only little with the Europeans based on land.[117]

By maintaining a thriving trade with passing ships, then, Anomabo leaders significantly affected the patterns of trade on the Gold Coast.

Eno Baisiue Kurentsi (John Currantee) and Anglo-Fante Relations in the 1750s

Beginning in the 1750s, relations between the elite Africans on the central coast of Ghana and the English company came to be dominated by

one figure, Eno Baisie Kurentsi, who was known in English records by the name John Currantee.[118] Kurentsi was the most powerful man in Anomabo in the 1740s and 1750s and led a major diplomatic effort with the English, who had reorganized their company and renamed it the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa. Kurentsi was probably born around the 1680s or 1690s and became omanhen—a title given to the highest political authority in a town or region—of Anomabo in, or just prior to, the year 1747.[119] "Kurentsi" is a Borbor Fante name associated with a district of Mankessim town, which suggests that Eno Baisie Kurentsi's ancestors were a prominent family among the early Akan migrants to the coast in the fourteenth century.[120] Contemporary observers were under the impression that Kurentsi had "raised himself to his present greatness" by questionable means and was in danger of suffering the consequences of this some day.[121] It is clear from accounts of his personality and descriptions of his words and actions that Kurentsi was a proud and aggressive leader who functioned comfortably and effectively on the transatlantic stage. In a letter he once sent to the king of England, Kurentsi addressed the king as an equal and politely requested that the head of the British Empire, "be good to the Fantees."[122]

Kurentsi welcomed an early Anglican missionary named Thomas Thompson into his home to provide regular religious and secular instruction in the 1750s. Thompson became acquainted with Kurentsi during his tenure on the coast from 1752 to 1756 and noted Kurentsi's typical daily routine in his *Account of Two Missionary Voyages*. Thompson estimated that Kurentsi was about eighty years old in the 1750s. Every day, according to Thompson, the people of Anomabo would come to Kurentsi with their palavers to be settled by him.

> His time for business was before nine in the morning, and the *pinins* [elders] and Cabosheers sat with him at his House to hear litigants, and determine their disputes, which were sometimes very long, and clamorous, agitated with much gesticulation and a great air of passion.[123]

After hearing palavers, Kurentsi was known to sit in a "bathing-tub" until mid-afternoon, drinking rum and smoking tobacco out of a long pipe which rested on the ground. When Thompson first arrived in Anomabo, Kurentsi proudly recited some of the letters of the English alphabet to him.[124]

Kurentsi's house served as a place of lodging for numerous transatlantic traders and administrators, especially during the years that Anomabo lacked a European fortification prior to 1753. He housed the crew that was building Anomabo Fort in the 1750s, as well as the first two governors of that fort, John Apperley and Richard Brew.[125] Kurentsi also secured connections to important African leaders in the region through marriage. For instance,

the daughter of the king of Akwamu was his wife. And one of Kurentsi's own daughters married Richard Brew, a successful Irish trader who set up a private business at Anomabo.[126] Kurentsi probably ruled until his death in 1774, but the details of his later life and death remain unclear.[127]

In the 1750s, when the Asante Kingdom was a growing power but still struggling to control the Kingdoms of Wassa, Twifo, and Akim on its southern border, Kurentsi and his successors seized an opportunity to strengthen their position of power in the region. The opportunity was created by the Compagnie du Sénégal—the French counterpart to England's Royal African Company and the Dutch West Indies Company—which began to pursue the rights to land on which to build a fortified trading post at Anomabo in 1749.[128] France had initially attempted to build at Anomabo in 1736 but was restrained by war with England.[129] In 1737 Captain George Hamilton of the ship *Argyle*, which was functioning as a floating factory, or ship-based trading post, at Anomabo, reported the arrival of a French ship and its threat to English trade.[130] In 1748 a Royal African Company report noted, "the ships of the French nation have anchored in that road and traded on an equal footing with the English to the great detriment of the national trade in general and that of the companys [*sic*] in particular."[131] French ships continued to arrive at Anomabo in 1751, 1752, and 1753, and agents of the Compagnie du Sénégal presented lavish gifts and services to Kurentsi to secure a trade agreement allowing their permanent presence at Anomabo.

The French advances convinced the English—who were in the midst of reorganizing the Royal African Company into the Committee of Merchants Trading to Africa—to erect "a new fort at Annamaboe in the place where the old one stood, as a means to prevent the French from depriving His Majesty's subjects of the valuable Trade to Africa" in 1752.[132] Britain's Board of Trade, to whom the committee in London reported, made special grants to the new company in 1753 and 1755 for rebuilding the fort at Anomabo to check what was perceived as French aggression in the area.[133] The committee was explicit in its instructions to Thomas Melvil, governor at Cape Coast Castle, that deterring French trade at Anomabo was the main purpose of establishing the fort: "Let it be the principal object of the person you send down [to Anomabo] to alienate as far as possible the affections of the natives from the French."[134]

Administrators of the newly founded Company of Merchants were also aware that their relations with local African political authorities were essential to their success on the Gold Coast (as the RAC had sometimes failed to note) and therefore explicitly promised Kurentsi, "in consideration of his attachment to us, and his preventing the French from setting upon the Fantee Coast, that we will undertake so far as tis in our power to secure to his posterity all the advantages and honours he at present possesses."[135]

The construction of Anomabo Fort by the English company created innumerable opportunities for Kurentsi and the townspeople of Anomabo to demand fees, gifts, and salaries from the company in the short term and reinforced Anomabo's place as a center of transatlantic trade and diplomacy on the Gold Coast in the long term. When John Apperley, the chief engineer for the construction of Anomabo Fort, arrived at Anomabo in January 1753, he was immediately embroiled in palavers with the townspeople.[136] The new fort was designed to be five times the size of the old one. The "Chief Magistrates of the Town" (i.e., Kurentsi and other prominent persons in Anomabo) complained that they objected to this because they had experienced problems with the inhabitants of the old fort and anticipated further inconveniences from the English.[137] The local elite also expressed frustration at the proposed location of the new fort between the "Cabboceer Town" and the "Fishing Town," two main sections of Anomabo.[138] Apperley modified the design of the fort by shortening the faces of the bastion in an effort to accommodate the townspeople. The size and positioning of the fort also had to take into account the townspeople's need for "a road to carry their dead past the fort to their burying ground" and the immobility of certain houses that were the burial sites of family elders. The negotiation of all these details involved meetings between Kurentsi and Apperley, at which Apperley had to distribute rum and other gifts.

Apperley faced other problems due to the overall weakness of the Committee of Merchants' presence on the Ghana coast. He was supplied with so few bricklayers that the Anomabo people accused him of not being serious about building a fort. He soon requested that the committee acquire forty male slaves in Gambia to bring to Anomabo for the purpose of "making artificers of them."[139]

Apperley noted the overall state of impotence of the company: half their forts were falling apart for lack of repairs and the remainder were a sorry comparison to the Dutch forts; few of the forts had more than three white men working in them; and most of the guns were honeycombed, so that they likely would not withstand being fired more than four times.[140] Moreover, in less than four months, Apperley's crew had suffered enormously from illness and death, probably from malaria and yellow fever in most cases. One factor and three artificers had already died. All the rest of the white men who came with him to Anomabo were now "dangerously ill." Apperley survived three and a half years before dying on the coast himself, from a disease believed by his colleagues to be consumption.[141]

From the first inkling of Anglo-French rivalry at Anomabo, the local African traders, political authorities, and townspeople clearly understood that there was an opportunity for their own gain. Kurentsi was in the most powerful position when it came to acquiring personal wealth and political advantage from the situation. He did this by courting the French as long as

possible and consistently demanding rents and payments from the British. Kurentsi encouraged a bond with the French by sending one of his sons to France.[142] This man, Lewis Banishee, was known in English records as the Anomabohene's "French son."[143] Meanwhile, another of Kurentsi's sons, William Ansah Sessarakoo, was the guest of George III in London and became known as "the Royal African."[144]

Apperley's reports show that Kurentsi maintained negotiations with the French for the potential construction of a French fort at Anomabo, even after agreeing to support the British in preventing a French settlement. "We find a great deal of difficulty in humouring the caprice of this restless people who will not be satisfied without an English & French fort built among them," he wrote in 1755. "The French have now satisfied them that they will be here to build a fort in 6 or 8 months time."[145] Meanwhile, Governor Melvil complained of "the endless designs of John Currantee & his advisors to squeeze still more money out of us."[146]

As it was being constructed, Anomabo Fort proved to be an even greater burden on the English company than its older forts. Melvil complained in May 30, 1753, "our other forts are built for the protection of those who live under them, and who assist us to build or repair, but at Annamaboe everything is to be made a job of & every step affords fresh matter of demand for more dashees."[147] After two years on the job, Apperley was downright indignant about the way the Fante were treating him at Anomabo. He reported that both the English company and private English traders were "distressed by the indolence of the Fantees, knowing they have us in their power & we not able to redress them, by reason we are obliged to keep a good understanding with the Fantees & bear their insults with patience, that we may execute what we came here upon."[148]

Besides Kurentsi, other people in Anomabo found ways to exploit the fort-building process. The other caboceers in Anomabo demanded payments regularly. "Every day produces fresh demands from the caboceers who say now is their time to eat," noted Melvil.[149] The common townspeople also found ways to benefit from the construction. Melvil wrote, "The [Anomabo] townspeople give us no assistance. On the contrary, they shew a strong disposition to retard our operations by every method except open violence. They want us to go on in a slow expensive manner, for after the fort is once finished, they expect we will retrench our presents."[150]

The construction of the fort was repeatedly interrupted by palavers, as Melvil's correspondence shows. Twice the inhabitants of Anomabo filled in the foundation dug by Apperley and his crew, forcing them to dig it out three times—each time hiring local laborers. Local people refused to be hired at any price to blow up stones for rocks, forcing the company to seek laborers elsewhere for this dangerous task. The price of labor was a huge

Figure 2.3. William Ansah Sessarakoo, son of Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee), mid-1700s. Portrait by John Faber Jr. Reproduced by permission from the National Portrait Gallery, London. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

issue for the English. Company reports note that "the people of Annamaboe go from every agreement and raise the prices of their labor upon us every day & are abetted in their extortions by those who, if they had any gratitude for favors receiv'd ought at least to remain neuter."[151]

Other ways in which the Anomabo townspeople initiated palavers were by preventing Apperley from obtaining slate and making the price

of producing lime prohibitively expensive. They also "deluded away" the enslaved Africans whom the English had brought from Gambia to work on the construction; whether these people were kept locally as slaves, freed, or sold to transatlantic traders is unknown. On many occasions, the English storehouses and shops were broken into and boards and tools stolen.

Apperley's reports clearly show that ongoing construction of the fort depended on his having a supply of imported brandy to distribute to the Anomabo caboceers, particularly those who were courting the French. He wrote, "brandy is our Chief article for stopping the mouths of the Fantees & curbing the insolence of the French party, without which we cannot be able to proceed in building the fort." He noted that the payments were the same whether construction was actually under way or not and that these were "no small part in the expence of the Fort."[152]

The Anomabo Fort construction project also had consequences for Anglo-Fante relations beyond Anomabo. Melvil complained in June 1754, "These proceedings at Annamaboe corrupt all the other Negroes who have any communication with that place, as they do not enter into the realm of our perseverance."[153] Overall, under the leadership of Eno Baisie Kurentsi, the coastal elite ensured that the 1750s were a decade in which their interests were served by the British Company of Merchants. In 1760 the then governor William Mutter, wrote that the company was in a "state of dependence" throughout the construction of Anomabo Fort.[154]

Anomabo from the 1760s to 1807

Considering the heightened threat of military conquest by Asante and the simultaneous intensification of the market forces of the Atlantic slave trade in the second half of the eighteenth century, it is notable that Anomabo not only survived Asante's invasions but continued to dominate commercial activity on the coast in this period. The British slave trade was in full swing by 1760, due largely to an enormous demand for slaves in Jamaica and Barbados. The most heavily armed fort on the Gold Coast was the new English fort at Anomabo; nevertheless, the trade at Anomabo remained very much in the hands of the Anomabo people, and the greatest benefits of transatlantic trading appear to have gone to them, not to the English company. Anomabo's African merchants continued to draw trade away from the British company's traders who inhabited the fort, and the Anomabo political authorities continued to find ways to use the fort and its inhabitants essentially as hostages for disputes and boycotts with the Company of Merchants.

Anomabo's African merchants provided valuable goods and services—particularly ready captives and provisions—more efficiently to the captains of visiting slave ships than could the company traders at Anomabo Fort.

As evidence of this, slave ship captains regularly chose to do business at Anomabo even though a "customs" tax of £97 trade money, or £48 sterling, was imposed on every vessel trading there.[155] A ship captain's comments on Cape Coast and Anomabo give a sense of the relative reputations of these two ports for trade in the 1760s. Of Cape Coast, he wrote, "I am inform'd there is not a great trade carried on here & but few slaves purchas'd." His remarks about Anomabo are much more positive: "Here is a great trade for slaves; we found at anchor in the road 17 English merch't ships."[156]

Some of the most serious disputes between the Anomabo townspeople and the British company centered around the insistence of the Anomabo people that the chief officer at Anomabo Fort be removed. In 1760 the fort was cut off from food and supplies for a month because the townspeople were demanding the removal of Mr. Greenhill. Governor Mutter noted, "He must quit the fort, or they will endeavour to starve him out of it."[157] A similar dispute arose in 1780, when the Anomabo people sent messengers to Cape Coast Castle "that they wished not to have Mr. Stubbs for their chief of that Fort, but that they would behave with respect to anyone that was sent in his room."[158] In that instance, Anomabo Fort was surrounded by armed men preventing anything from going in or out of the fort. During these boycotts of the Company of Merchants, trade flourished outside the walls of Anomabo Fort. In the 1770s Richard Brew proclaimed, with some exaggeration surely, that nearly half the inhabitants of Anomabo were brokers, or "goldtakers," as they were known at the time.[159]

Under the leadership of Eno Baisie Kurentsi's successor, Amonu Kuma I, Anomabo expanded its reputation as a center of commerce and diplomacy on the coast. The present-day Anomabohene, Nana Amonu XI, is a direct descendant of Amonu Kuma I, who was enstooled in the early 1770s (most likely 1774).[160] Amonu was already a noted caboceer in Anomabo in the 1760s, when he first appeared on the company's payroll.[161] He was probably a captain of an Anomabo militia company, or asafo.[162] Amonu Kuma was a leader of enormous stature, rivaled in the region perhaps only by the Asantehene. When the English company ordered gifts from Europe for the Asante king, they made sure to order comparable ones for the Anomabohene, lest he take offence, as indicated in the governor's letter to the council in London in 1775:

> I shall send the king [Asantehene] by my messenger the best present I can procure in the country; . . . and I beg that you will order out for that purpose by the first good opportunity, a large umbrella of crimson damask, with gold fringe, and gilt elephant as top, to spread 15 feet; a large white sattin cloth to be lined, and a double row of scallopped gold lace, with large tassels; a very large silver basket-hilted sword, and a gold headed cane with the arms of the company engraved; with a hat and feather, or rather an elegant coronet. At the

> same time, Gentlemen, I beg you will be pleased to order the same present to be put up for Amooney Coomah, the king of Fante, as he has never received any from you yet, and he is by far the best man, and the most attached to the English interest of any in the whole Fantee Country. Only you will please to observe that Ammoney Coomah's umbrella spreads only 12 feet, and that his cloth and other things, should be in a small degree inferior to the King of Ashantee's. The cane only silver . . .[163]

The governor later opined that a silver cane would not suffice for Amonu Kuma: "We beg leave to give it as our opinion that Amooney Coomah would not accept a silver headed cane; and the difference in price between the two is too trifling to risque the trial."[164]

Amonu's palace or house was the meeting place for town leaders in times of conflict with European traders. For example, when Richard Brew had a quarrel with a broker at Anomabo, the palaver was organized from Amonu Kuma's house:

> Yesterday being the 21st in the morning they again set to work beating their drums to assemble the towns people who accordingly mett and talked the affair over after which they sent in John Quomino Linguist of the Fort and Old Peter Quashy one of the pynins to desire I would send them out some liquor to drink & that they woud disperse till evening when they woud all assemble again at Amony Coomas house & inform me what I must pay for the pallaver.[165]

The English company's access to the slave trade from Asante hinged on its cooperation with Amonu Kuma in this period. The manner in which the English attempted to improve the flow of trade from Asante to Anomabo in 1775 illustrates the importance of the company's cooperation with Amonu Kuma:

> A month ago, the king of Ashantee sent down messengers to acquaint me that he wanted to open a market nearer the waterside than before; the Fantees have acquiesced to it, and as I foresee, a certainty of such a step being very beneficial to the trade in general, I shall in a few days dispatch a messenger of my own, together with one from Ammoney Comah, by the return of the Shantees, to acquaint him of our hearty concurrence therein. By the above messenger I am also told, that the King of Ashantee is determined to forget all former differences and to live in the strictest amity with the Fantees, so that we have no reason to doubt but that the trade will continue good.[166]

It is unlikely that Amonu Kuma ever intended to comply with this proposal for an Asante market near the coast, since the profits of intermediary trade were essential to the sustenance of the Coastal Coalition's military

and political survival. In any event, the market was never established and in 1780 Asante instead invaded the coastal town of Appolonia—far to the west of Anomabo—increasing the inland kingdom's direct access to the western Gold Coast.[167]

That same year the English company tried again to establish cooperation among the people "between Anomabo and Asante" in maintaining a regular flow of trade to and from the coast. They asked Amonu Kuma to appeal to "the People of the Fantee Country" to ensure safe travel for inland traders:

> The President moves that previous to the delivery of the presents aforesaid the vice president do inform Amoony Coomah that the presents are sent to him by his Majesty the King of Great Britain under the care and direction of a committee of the Company to induce him . . . to exert his interest and influence with the people of The Fantee Country to prevail on them, to persue every means in their power to enter into an agreement with the Caboceers, Men of Interest and Authority in the several Countries between Annamaboe and the Kingdom of Ashantee and for said Messengers safe return with such persons as the King of Ashantee may appoint or send to the Council to receive the presents sent to him . . . and that Amoony Coomah and the Fantees do engage as far as they possibly can that the said persons so sent by the King of Ashantee to be protected from any acts of voylance or ill treatment whatsoever during their stay at Cape Coast Town in the Fantee Country or else where, and that they have safe conduct with the presents delivered to them by the Council to the Kingdom of Ashantee. Also that Amoony Coomah do engage by every means in his Power the people of the Fantee Country to join the Governor and Council to settle the differences and disputes as have been of long continuance between the water side People and the several inland Countries that the traders from them may come without fear or molestation to the sea side.[168]

Once again, there is no indication that these appeals by the British company effected any significant change in the organization of trade between Asante and the central Gold Coast. The Coastal Coalition intercepted as much of the southward trade from Asante as possible, ultimately provoking the total conquest of the coast by Asante forces in 1807.

Another indication of the importance of cooperation between Amonu Kuma and the English company was that messengers of the Company of Merchants carried Amonu Kuma's official flag with them. Amonu Kuma's flag, which he would give to English officials to carry when they were traveling within Fanteland, identified them as having Amonu's support or endorsement. This did not necessarily keep the said officials from being abused by coastal people outside of Anomabo, but it did broadcast the company's dependence on Amonu Kuma's endorsement of their actions.[169]

A palaver that developed between Thomas Miles, governor of Anomabo Fort (and vice president of the Council of Merchants at the time), and

Amonu Kuma reveals the extent of the latter's power and influence over the English company in the 1790s. The palaver involving Miles began with a simple dispute, the type that must have happened daily on the Gold Coast in the era of the slave trade. A canoe full of company goods overturned in the rough waters near the beach and, during the pandemonium that followed, some firewood that was lying near the fort was stolen. The sergeant from the fort, Mr. Swann, who was temporarily in charge of fort affairs while Miles was conducting business at a neighboring fort, decided to punish the "bomboy"—an African employee charged with supervising the loading and unloading of canoes on the beach outside of the castle—for allowing this theft to occur. Sergeant Swann struck the bomboy, drawing blood. The offended bomboy then appealed to his fellow asafo company soldiers to seek retribution for this act which, aside from being unnecessarily violent, also occurred on a fetish day.[170]

This minor incident turned into a full-fledged palaver involving Amonu Kuma because Swann refused to compensate the man he had wounded. When Miles returned to Anomabo, he found that the asafo company had "put fetish" on the gate of the fort, initiating an official palaver between Anomabo and the fort inhabitants.[171] Instead of entering into negotiations to resolve the palaver, Miles took a hostile stance toward Amonu Kuma. And when the Anomabohene sent two official messengers to the fort, Miles seized them. When the asafo company invited Miles to enter into a negotiation for a settlement to the palaver, he refused to accept the pawns that were offered as collateral, thereby refusing to discuss a settlement.

Having been repeatedly snubbed in this way by the fort inhabitants, the Anomabo townspeople began to strike back at the Company of Merchants as a whole. They demanded that Miles be removed from his position at Anomabo Fort and apparently put a price on his head, as Miles was nearly kidnapped on at least one occasion when he left the safety of the fort in the following days.[172] Finally, people from Anomabo seized company canoes carrying twenty-two slaves (and an unspecified number of canoemen) as it passed Agya (a village adjacent to Anomabo) on its way to a British slaver off the Anomabo shore. When Miles insisted that the slaves be returned, his request was denied.

Without consulting his superiors, Miles proceeded to wage an attack on the towns of Agya and Anomabo on April 9 and 10, 1791. He supplemented the Anomabo Fort garrison with twenty crewmembers of a nearby British slaver called the *Jupiter*. Miles and his men severely damaged both towns, burning houses and looting.[173] Most significantly, amid this rampage some of the men committed the ultimate act of disrespect to the Anomabo people—they raided the grave sites of prominent Anomabo citizens and stole valuables buried within.[174]

Retaliation was swift and harsh. Governor Feilde reported that thirty to forty company slaves had been seized by "the Fantees," all communication by land was shut down, and "trade of every kind is stopped." In addition, five company employees had been killed and ten more wounded.[175] At the end of April, the council met and took action to appease their African foes. They immediately sent two messengers from Cape Coast Castle to Anomabo to inform Amonu Kuma that they wished to settle the dispute and that they had ordered Miles to stop harassing the Anomabo people. They also voted to suspend Miles and send him back to England. As one member of the council wrote, "the present dispute with the Fantees can never be settled as long as Mr. Miles remains Governor of Anamaboe, principally from the mortal hatred the Fantees bear him."[176] Officials in London eventually concurred, and the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade resolved on November, 22, 1792, to remove Miles from his employment as a servant and officer of the company. Miles was found to have "conducted himself with great Precipitation and Rashness in the course of his Disputes with the natives."[177]

The palavers between the Company of Merchants and Amonu Kuma, like those involving Kurentsi, reveal the ways in which, during the era of the slave trade, Anomabo elites played principal roles in shaping the conduct of English company trade on the Gold Coast. More importantly, the skillful handling of palavers and the maintenance of a bustling trade with noncompany ships throughout the construction of Anomabo Fort and thereafter reinforced Anomabo's position as a thriving Atlantic market and coastal political power.

Conclusion

The rapid expansion of transatlantic slave trading on the Ghana coast caused a sort of crisis of adaptation, comparable to that which occurred in many parts of Africa when the slave trade ended and Atlantic commerce became focused around so-called legitimate exports.[178] The end of the gold-trade era ushered in heightened violence and different business practices. Men such as Kurentsi and Amonu Kuma played greater roles in regional and Atlantic events than Anomabo elites before them, partly because of the growth of wealth and military capability across Fanteland and the larger process of the Coastal Coalition's emergence. But they were also instigators of political change through their leadership and charisma. In spite of the presence of numerous forts and castles on the coast, the greatest number of captives embarked from Anomabo, a port town that had no functional fort prior to 1755 and was thereafter the site of a fort that was notoriously ineffective (from the perspective of the Europeans inhabiting it).

Some of the coastal elites' advantages in Atlantic trade were made possible by the inefficiency, disorganization, and general impairment of the British companies. For example, the factor at Anomabo Fort in 1714, Peter Holt, was known to be illegally trading with interlopers and improperly dispensing alcohol to Anomabo leaders in the town for his personal advantage.[179] The miscalculation of the costs of building and maintaining the large Anomabo Fort was another problem for the company. And its agents on the coast constantly requested much-needed supplies and personnel that never seemed to arrive in sufficient quantity or quickly enough.

But mostly the African advantage was by design. African political authorities, traders, townspeople, and hired laborers intentionally found ways to manipulate the British company. For this, they drew on the fact that the Dutch-Asante alliance was a huge threat to the British. They also exploited every opportunity to encourage French competition with the British on the Gold Coast. They attracted private traders and pirate ships by ensuring a regular supply of marketable slaves, maintaining attractive prices, and providing a relatively peaceful and regulated slave market (this meant preventing the English company from driving off other ships). This is not to suggest that coastal political or commercial life revolved around exploitation of the British. The main concerns of the coastal elite in the eighteenth century centered on preventing an Asante invasion—both military and commercial. But the British were essential to that cause, and generally useful as a source of weapons, credit, cash, and trade goods.

3

A New Form of Government

> When the iniquitous and accursed slave trade stirred up the cupidity and all the degrading passions of men, it became highly expedient for every person to be under the protection of a powerful neighbour.
>
> —John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*

During the eighteenth century, a new set of leaders took control of the coast. Alongside these political changes, the social organization of coastal societies transformed as well, due to new relationships of dependency forming among communities within the new political structure. These changes were not caused directly by the activities of European or American traders, who increasingly participated in slave trading on this coast, but rather were indirect consequences of the instability associated with the transatlantic slave trade. As John Mensah Sarbah suggests, people with power attracted people in need of protection during this period. The new government came about through a process of war and destruction that decentralized political power in the region while creating opportunities for new leaders to assume power. The wars are well documented in European accounts.[1] But less documented are the networks of dependency and mutual obligation that formed within African societies during this era. The outcome of the political transformation was greater decentralization of political authority across the coastal region compared to the small "kingdoms" that had existed in the seventeenth century. Yet the region simultaneously became more politically unified through a process of coalition building among previously separate polities.

Wars plagued the coastal polities in the first decades of the 1700s much as they had in the closing decades of the 1600s, except on a larger scale. The kings of Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, Acron, and Agona lost all their former power in these wars, and those polities ceased to exist as sovereign entities. The wars destroyed the political order of the seventeenth century, which had been centered on "kings" residing in the hinterland capitals of coastal polities. While the institution of kingship was dissolving, however, Borbor Fante warlords grew increasingly influential in trade, diplomacy, and military affairs in the region.

The wars of the early eighteenth century created opportunities for a new cadre of leaders to replace former "kings" as politico-military leaders in the

region. The basis of power of the new elite had a distinct military dimension that distinguished leaders of the slave-trade era from their predecessors. The power of political authorities in southern Ghana always rested on a combination of proper lineage and of ritual and spiritual knowledge and ability.[2] In addition to these requirements for leadership, the power wielded by the new elite in the eighteenth century stemmed from their military prowess and the security they offered to people living under the conditions of a growing transatlantic slave trade. The development of a new military system, the asafo companies, in which commoners participated in the defense of the region under the command of the new elite, was a key feature of eighteenth-century political power.

By the 1730s the new leadership had created a coalition form of government. In the 1740s the coalition established its role in regional politics by forging critical alliances with Wassa and Twifo—two powerful states located in the hinterland, between Kumase and the region under control of the Coastal Coalition. By the 1750s the Coastal Coalition was the only autonomous polity that survived in a region that had otherwise been appropriated by the Asante Kingdom.

The formation and mature form of this new government, to which I refer as the Coastal Coalition, is the subject of this chapter.[3] Coalition rule lasted until 1807, when it was finally defeated by Asante.[4] In the process of defending themselves from conquest and exploiting Atlantic trade, the coastal population forged new social, religious, and military institutions between the 1730s and 1807. These became the basis of an emerging Fante identity, which would continue to evolve in the nineteenth century. The Coastal Coalition was the political structure within which these eighteenth-century institutions were formed.

What follows represents a new interpretation of southern Ghana's political history between 1700 and 1807. The political transformation that took place in southern Ghana in the eighteenth century has previously been described by historians in various and conflicting ways. Some have argued that the Borbor Fante launched a campaign of territorial expansion against its neighbors between 1700 and 1730 in the interest of founding a centralized state.[5] For example, John Fynn's interpretation of the coastal wars of the early eighteenth century emphasizes territorial expansion:

> At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Fante embarked upon a policy of military expansion aimed at gaining political control of the older coastal states of Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu and Agona so as to control the northward flow of firearms. By 1750, the Fante had so well succeeded that they controlled the line of coast, stretching from the mouth of the River Pra in the west to Senya Breku in the east.[6]

Adu Boahen echoes this interpretation, dubbing the coastal wars of the early eighteenth century a phase of "imperial expansion" by the Fante.[7] Ray Kea implies a similar interpretation by treating Fante as one of several expanding imperial states of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, together with Akwamu, Denkyira, and Asante.[8]

A countervailing argument mounted primarily by James Sanders firmly denies that the wars of the early eighteenth century involved political development of a centralized state:

> There is little evidence in Fanteland of a connexion between wars of conquest and political development, least of all of the kind discernible in Asante history. Growth in central administrative offices attendant upon the acquisition of new territories does not appear to be a feature of the Fante case. . . . Lacking a tradition of centralized political community, the Fante settled areas left vacant by wars against hostile neighbours in their new environment along the coast.

Sanders argues instead that the Borbor Fante waged war in the interest of protecting its intermediary role in the slave trade.[9]

The present study seeks to resolve this confusion in the historiography by widening the scope of analysis to include processes of change that stemmed from the evolution of coastal society itself. Historians have tended to focus exclusively on developments outside of the coastal region—particularly the expansion of the Asante Kingdom and the growth of the Atlantic slave trade—that contributed to the political transformation of southern Ghana in the eighteenth century.[10] While these factors certainly influenced coastal warfare and politics in the first half of the eighteenth century, the internal processes that effected the formation of a decentralized coalition government on the coast were equally, if not more, important than external factors in its evolution. Events unfolding in the forest hinterland and around the Atlantic basin clearly prompted the violence that destroyed the political order of the seventeenth century. But the spread of violence alone cannot explain the creation of a new form of political organization and the social institutions that supported it. These can only be understood as stemming from a broader set of internal dynamics.

The most significant developments within coastal society affecting the political transformation of the eighteenth century were the rise of a new warlord elite, which benefited from a new commoner-based military organization, and the commercial development of Anomabo.[11] The absence heretofore of an analysis of these internal dynamics within coastal communities—and the exclusive focus on external factors—has encouraged the inaccurate portrayal of Fante political history in the eighteenth century in two contradictory, but equally unhelpful, ways: as a "typically Akan" process of formation of a centralized state or as a process driven primarily by the actions of Europeans.

The sources available to the historian for studying internal processes of change in the political life of southern Ghana in the eighteenth century are limited. Any attempt to represent the fluid relations of power within a society that did not create its own written record faces a number of challenges. By bringing together data from different types of European correspondence and records, oral tradition, and ethnography, however, this chapter presents what I believe is a more complete picture of the political transformation of southern Ghana from a collection of small polities to a powerful decentralized coalition in the eighteenth century.

While southern Ghana was exceptional in Africa for hosting a substantial Afro-European marketplace centered on a nonhuman commodity (gold) for more than two centuries before joining the rest of the continent in slave-oriented, Afro-European trade, it experienced many of the same general effects of the growth of the slave trade as did other parts of western Africa. In some ways, the political transformation in southern Ghana resembled processes of change in political organization taking place elsewhere in West and West Central Africa in the eighteenth century and should be seen as part of a larger regional process as well as a local response to changing conditions. Paul Lovejoy's research has shown that West and West Central African polities tended to grow smaller and more belligerent in regions that were heavily involved in the transatlantic slave trade.[12] Political power came to be located in a smaller number of hands, and they were the hands of warlords rather than purely political figureheads. The rise of warlords across much of the continent stemmed from the pervasive violence necessary for the enslavement of so many otherwise free people. Political authority rested on leaders' ability to provide protection to people under the extremely volatile and dangerous circumstances of the Atlantic slave trade.

The Atlantic slave trade could not have happened without the destruction of African political economies through political violence, argues Lovejoy.[13] Whether the majority of the enslaved were war captives—as in the Bight of Benin—or victims of raids, kidnapping, judicial conviction, defaults on pawnship, or religiously sanctioned enslavement—as in the Bight of Biafra and Niger Delta—the acts of violence that enslaved millions of people in the eighteenth century dramatically altered the forms of government across West Africa. On the coast of modern-day Benin, the Kingdoms of Ouidah and Allada expanded and were subsequently conquered and incorporated by the Kingdom of Dahomey.[14] In the Niger Delta and modern-day Guinea-Bissau, the slave trade caused a breakdown in the political structure, resulting in the organization of *abirempong*, or "big men," into coalitions for purposes of military defense and preservation of the intermediary trade.[15] One of the earliest African states to participate in the slave trade with Europeans, the Kongo Kingdom, experienced a massive civil war that led to its collapse in the 1500s and early 1600s.[16] In each case, local and internal

developments drove these political changes while external conditions associated with the Atlantic slave trade necessitated adaptation.

Research done in recent decades has also made it possible to identify patterns in the chronological progression of slave trade-related political transformations in West Africa, which is crucial for understanding the formation of the Coastal Coalition in southern Ghana. Wherever the transatlantic slave trade developed along western Africa's coastline, it initially took its victims from coastal and near-coastal communities. Over the course of a few decades, however, the enslaved Africans sold at the coast were mainly "imports" from more distant lands in the interior of the country. The so-called slaving frontier gradually moved deeper into the African continent, provoking violence and political destabilization across the landscape. In the cases of the Slave Coast and Gold Coast, wars near the coast produced slaves for a certain amount of time while states expanded, and then imported slaves became the main source of slaves for export.[17] When the shift to imported slaves occurred, the coastal regions were able to maintain or increase in population density, though more and more of the people within those populations were slaves. In the early eighteenth century, southern Ghana was in the process of making this shift from slave-producing region to slave-importing region.

As recent research has increasingly demonstrated, African societies responded to the exigencies of the Atlantic slave trade in ways that drew on local, indigenous knowledge and resources, yet the struggle to survive as communities, families, and free individuals was universal.[18] While African political economies were destroyed by wars associated with slave trading, a simultaneous and equally necessary process of integration of previously disconnected regions and peoples occurred through the building of commercial networks.[19] Thus, southern Ghana was the site of chronic warfare in the early part of the eighteenth century but also a hub of trade for an expanding commercial system that created new impetus for cooperation among the coastal peoples.

This chapter analyzes the political transformation of coastal Ghana over the course of the eighteenth century. The first section, "The Rise of a New Elite," describes how a new group of politico-military leaders (warlords) seized opportunities to control trade and acquire dependents in the first three decades of the 1700s. It also explains the formation of commoner armies, and places the emergence of Anomabo as a main urban center and Atlantic slave market within the context of these political and military developments. Finally, the first section will analyze the negotiations that took place during the period of Opoku Ware's reign as Asantehene, c. 1720–50, whereby the nascent Coastal Coalition formed alliances with polities lying between the coastland and Kumase, creating a border with Asante. The second section, "The Mature Coalition," describes the nature of political power in the coalition in the period from roughly 1750 to 1807. This section examines contemporary eighteenth-century accounts of the coalition to

show how it was organized and how it operated, and explores the meanings of political and military titles used by contemporary observers to explain how the coalition functioned and how power was distributed among the various leaders. It further examines evidence of conflicts and tensions between leaders within what was then known as "Fanteland," revealing some of the limits of the coalition's unity.

Part 1: The Rise of a New Elite (c. 1700–1750)

Collapse of the Seventeenth-Century Political Order

In the first three decades of the eighteenth century, the skirmishes between coastal polities that began in the previous century increased in scale and frequency, to the extent that most of the small coastal polities—including Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, and Agona—were stripped of their royal families by 1730. In contrast to figure 1.1, which shows the numerous political divisions along the coast in the seventeenth century, figure 3.1 shows the consolidation of numerous polities into a single group, known by the mid-eighteenth century as "Fanteen." Coastal government and politics were in a state of chaos for much of this period. During these decades European agents on the coast constantly speculated in a futile attempt to identify the most advantageous ally among the African warlords. Contemporary accounts document a series of drastic fluctuations in political authority as armies clashed, kings were captured or killed, and new leaders took their place, only to repeat the process.

The outbreak of wars between the coastal polities was related to dramatic shifts in the centers of commerce and political power in the interior. When Osei Tutu defeated the armies of Denkyira in 1701, he claimed most, if not all, of the gold-mining regions of the Gold Coast interior for Asante.[20] The people living on or near the coast were affected by the subsequent strengthening of relations between the Dutch WIC and the Asantehene. The strongest immediate impact of Asante's expansion was the beginning of direct communication and gift giving between the Dutch and the Asante king, as the Dutch sought his assistance in maintaining the flow of trade and the Asante king sought Dutch assistance in expanding influence in the coastal region.[21] The other major impact of the growth of the Asante state, from the point of view of the coastal population, was the beginning of wars in which the Asante attempted to subject various areas previously under Denkyira's rule, including Wassa, Twifo, Akwamu, and Akyem. Coastal leaders had to formulate a response to the emergence of this new power. None of them could defy the Asante Kingdom alone. They had to join forces if they were to survive, commercially or politically.

Asante elites coveted the profitable market centers along the central stretch of Ghana's coastline from the very early days of Asante expansion.

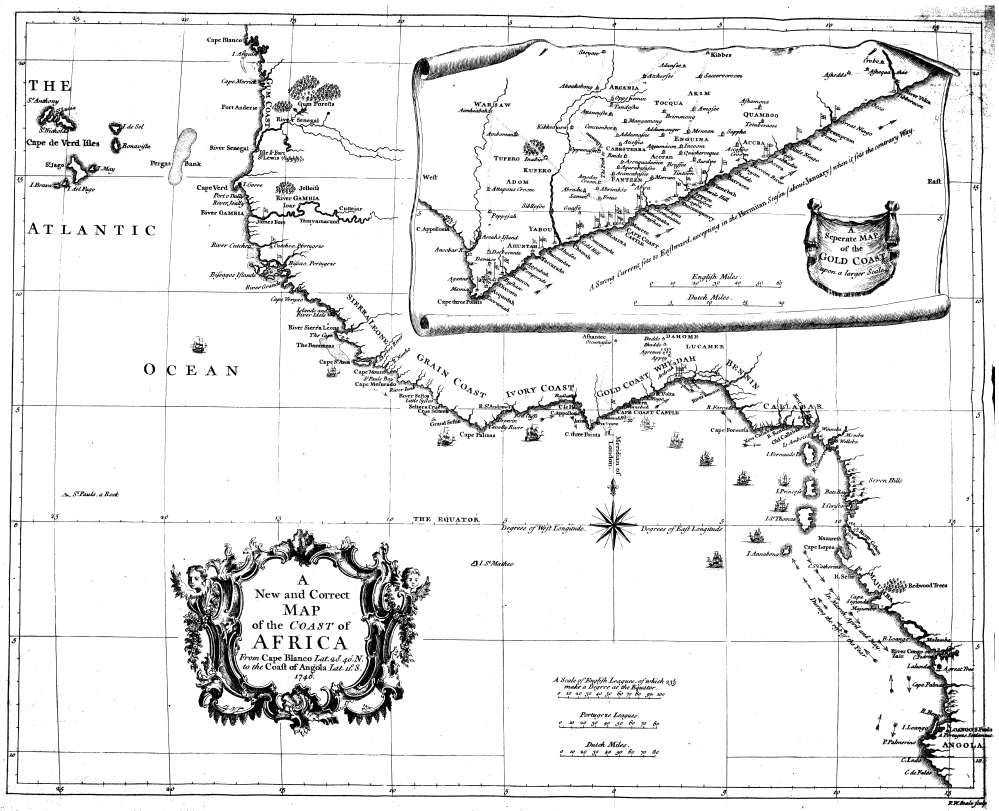


Figure 3.1. Map of the Gold Coast circa 1746. Postlethwayt, *National and Private Advantage,* 232 e.224. Reproduced by permission from the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

In 1708 the Asantehene Osei Tutu was already trying to establish an arrangement with the English company to enable Asante to conquer all of the coastal states.[22] Both the English and Dutch companies suffered economic losses on the Gold Coast in the first few decades of the eighteenth century because the warfare sparked by Asante's expansion, while producing some captives, also disrupted commerce throughout the region.[23]

The first conflict that stood out to European observers as unprecedented in scale and severity was the attack by the Borbor Fante on Asebu and Fetu in 1708. In the early part of that year, Asebu was completely routed by Borbor Fante forces who beheaded the Asebu king.[24] Fighting between the Borbor Fante and their western neighbors had been a regular occurrence since the mid-1600s, but the conflict reached new heights in this brutal attack.[25]

After Asebu was crushed in 1708, several wars broke out among coastal polities between Eguafo and Agona. Some of these wars involved the states that lay in the hinterland of the coastal polities, in the lands that separated the coastal polities from the newly formed Asante Kingdom—including Abrem, Twifo, Wassa, Cabesterra, Akanny, Akyem, and Akwamu. Observers noted a constant state of warfare throughout this area in 1710, 1711, 1712, and 1713.[26] A Dutch account dated 1712 indicated the unprecedented pervasiveness of the fighting: "Never in our memory, and as far as old manuscripts concerning events here show, has the condition on this Coast been such as it is now, when one cannot find a single little village of which it could be said that it has stayed outside the war."[27]

In the 1720s warlords from the Borbor Fante area won some important victories that established "Fantyn" as the military might on the war-torn coastal landscape. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Borbor Fante state of Fantyn was one of the most powerful states in southern Ghana.[28] Barbot described it as "heavily populated, being one of the most considerable on Gold Coast."[29] Borbor Fante victories in Fetu in 1720 set the stage for the eventual elimination of the king of Fetu in subsequent years.[30] In 1724 Borbor Fante armies defeated the king of Agona, greatly expanding Borbor Fante influence in the area to its immediate east, including Winneba.[31] The Dutch remarked in 1728 that there were continuing troubles on the Coast, "mainly caused by the tumultuous Fantynse," and that this was making it difficult for the WIC to supply slaves to its ships when they came to trade at Elmina.[32]

Unlike the Komenda wars of the late 1600s, the wars of the early 1700s were not prompted or manipulated by the Dutch and English trading companies but appear to have stemmed solely from competition between African warlords. A Dutch report of 1712 reveals a changed situation in the coastal wars, whereby the European companies were no longer able to hire or bribe coastal kings to fight against particular enemies on behalf of the company's commercial interests. In the wars of the early eighteenth century, rather, the Dutch and English appear to have been watching, waiting, and wondering

about the outcomes of the coastal wars. As the report states, the entire Gold Coast was split into two "parties" on the verge of a major military clash: Asante, Aowin, Wassa, Eguafo, Abrem, Akani, Fetu, Sebu, Borbor Fante, and Acron/Gomoa in one camp, and Twifo, Cabesteras, Akyem, Denkyira, and Agona in the other.[33] The Dutch could not predict which side, if victorious, would favor the Dutch company's commercial interests. The defeat of Asante would ruin the trade of the Upper Coast (Elmina and westward), they predicted, but the defeat of Akyem would halt the gold trade and weaken Akwamu, causing the gold trade of the Lower Coast (especially Accra) to stop.

The Europeans were not instigators, then, but observers of these wars. They realized that the new elite among the Borbor Fante could not be manipulated using tactics that had worked for the trading companies in the era of the gold trade. Director-General Schoonheyd, of the Dutch WIC, believed that making war on the Fante would be counterproductive since "that would involve us in warfare along the whole coast, because there is hardly any state here which is not allied to the [Borbor] Fantynse." For the same reason, he noted, no individual or polity on the coast would dare to declare war on the Borbor Fante on account of a dispute.[34]

This change indicates a fundamental shift in the causes of warfare on the Ghana coast after 1700. In the context of the expanding Atlantic slave trade in the coastal markets, the stakes associated with warfare were higher. The victors could now offer military protection to communities threatened with the constant risk of capture and enslavement, and thereby accumulate political dependents. Some wars ended with the establishment of new leaders in towns that were pillaged. After winning a war against Fetu, for example, Borbor Fante leaders—presumably military elites—prepared to install a new leader to replace the king.[35] The destruction of the coastal polities was strategically planned by the rising leaders of coastal towns. Wars were planned by "deputies" from the various coastal and subcoastal states. For example, Borbor Fante leaders negotiated with deputies from Akwamu, Twifo, Comenda/Eguafo, and Akani to wage war on Cabesterra in 1709.[36]

Building a New Network of Political Authority

The long-term outcome of warlords' acquisition of dependents through success in warfare was the formation of networks of political interdependency across the coastal region. An eighteenth-century description of what this looked like on the ground appeared in a letter between English agents on the Ghana coast in the 1765:

> Nov 12—Sent in a present to Cudjoe (alias Cogo) Brim a Fante Cababoceer to whose family Winnebah belongs on account of the trouble he has taken in settling the past disturbances there . . . 1 6 flask case brandy, 8 lbs beef.[37]

This account suggests that entire towns could owe allegiance to a particular individual (or more likely a lineage) residing in one of the principal towns of the Coastal Coalition. In this case, the author implies that the people living in the town of Winneba collectively "belonged to" Cudjoe Brim's family, who resided in Cape Coast. The allegiance was probably demonstrated through military service, tribute payments, and cooperation with general boycotts against foreign-trading entities.

Of course, the other significant potential rewards for victory in these wars were collection of fees and booty and control of trade. Each major victory by a Borbor Fante captain resulted in the acquisition of slaves, gold, or dependents, or all three. Likely, a large dashee—payment in cash or trade goods—was included, along with a regular salary from the Europeans stationed in forts within the conquered territory. The collection of fees from victims of a Borbor Fante attack on Apam was noted in Dutch records in 1724.[38] Some of the prominent Borbor Fante traders were also known to have attempted to set up their own trade relations with the English company following military victories they gained in 1708.[39]

The men who replaced the so-called kings of the coastal polities as the politico-military leaders of the coast were men of military rank and experience. They were likely to own large numbers of slaves and participate in the gold trade or slave trade or both, as these were the keys to wealth and power in the early 1700s. Kea has argued that the acquisition of status, power, and wealth began with ownership of slaves and possession of gold. "Access to slaves was tied to the social hierarchy—only persons of high social rank could own them—and to property—only persons of means could purchase them."[40]

An early example is Kwegya Akwa (spelled "Acqua" or "Aqua" in European records). The Borbor Fante conquest of Asebu was led by this man, who has been memorialized in Anomabo oral traditions.[41] Akwa's case shows the importance of intermarriage, as well as military conquest, in consolidating the powerful positions of the new elite. A Borbor Fante warlord, Kwegya Akwa was instrumental in defeating Asebu in 1706. According to tradition, he spent most of his early years in Asebu because of his mother's remarriage to an Asebu chief, and he learned the country and its secrets. He saw that in times of crisis the Asebu hid their valuables in a sacred grove called Ananaawa mu, near a pool just outside Asebu Ekuroful. In the campaign against Amanfi, Akwa led the Borbor Fante to the grove at the critical moment, where they found Amanfi and his family hidden. A fierce battle raged for several days, and Asebu was overcome. Amanfi and several royal family members were killed or taken prisoner. The victors seized the gold ornaments, precious beads, and other important items of regalia from the Asebu monarchy.

Towns and polities that were defeated in battle during this period rarely became tribute states of any central government. Nor can the wars themselves be accurately described as wars of territorial expansion, although

they did occasion the settlement of Borbor Fante warlords across the central coast. It was more advantageous to the victorious army to plunder and leave the defeated group militarily weakened than to conquer them outright. Because of retaliation by allies, annihilation of one chief by another usually weakened the conquering state in the long run, whereas plundering and leaving the chiefdom in tact strengthened the victor. This strategy was common across West Africa because it provided slaves and munitions to the victor, while leaving the vanquished unable to retaliate.[42] Outright annihilation created problems because of the geographic and technological complications of warfare in eighteenth-century West Africa. Armies had to proceed to battle on foot, leaving their homes, lands, and families extremely vulnerable to attack for weeks or months at a time. To march into and occupy a new territory therefore involved enormous risk of attack by one's enemies. Strategies of intimidation focused on controlling access to the principal trade routes, on the other hand, involved less labor and could be negotiated among the coastal states to the benefit of all.[43]

The process of acquiring the allegiance of neighboring groups as political dependents began in the late seventeenth century. While territorial expansion was not the primary goal of the wars between coastal polities at that time, a process of political realignment was nevertheless underway prior to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Because the Borbor Fantes had developed a strong military force by the late seventeenth century, neighboring polities sought alliances with them to ensure their survival against the much greater threat of invasion by Denkyira or Akwamu. In the period of chronic fighting of the 1680s and 1690s, weaker polities found that they needed to "choose" a stronger polity as their "protector." The polity of Acron was under the protection of Borbor Fante leaders by the time of the Komenda Wars of the 1690s and showed political subordination by contributing soldiers to the Borbor Fante forces that went to assist Komenda in 1694.[44] Kwame Daaku describes the alliances that formed among coastal states as part of this process of seeking protection from stronger states: "Weaker states found it politically wise to ally themselves with larger and stronger ones. . . . Through diplomacy, therefore, a state like Fante grew powerful."[45] Even neighboring states that had greater military power than Borbor Fante took heed of the latter's strength in the region. Akwamu formed alliances with the Borbor Fante to ensure that the Borbor Fante would not join with its coastal partners—especially Acron and Agona—to attack Akwamu.[46] The formation of such relationships of dependency between polities was typical across precolonial Africa whenever small polities faced the threat of conquest by larger ones.[47]

In the eighteenth century, the conquest of a coastal polity by Borbor Fante forces was often quickly followed by the renewal of the defeated polity's autonomy. For instance, the Borbor Fante are said to have "routed" the Sebu, Fetu, and Cabesterra in December 1707. The devastation was so great

that one witness said the inhabitants of Cape Coast town had been reduced to a state in which "no person of note or reputation & but a few free people" remained.[48] Yet Cabesterras had reportedly recovered its military might by 1710, when the Borbor Fante were considered unlikely to be able to win another battle against them.[49]

One of the ironies of the transatlantic slave trade, from the point of view of African elites, was that the imported goods derived from the trade enabled accumulation of dependents, yet the maintenance of the trade required the release of some of those dependents, as slaves, into the slave trade.[50] The wars enabled victorious military leaders to accrue dependents, wealth, and control of trade routes and market centers. The goal was seizure of goods and, more importantly, rights in people—not land. Some of those people were sold into the slave trade and thus exchanged for trade goods, but many others became dependents, whether slaves or taxable free dependents who could be called on for military and other kinds of service.

Overall, the Borbor Fante appear to have gained the most and lost the least—compared to other coastal polities—in the wars of 1708–28. By 1726 the coastal polities began to coordinate their military efforts against their common enemy, Asante. The temporary alliances that coastal polities had grown accustomed to making for purposes of war now became more permanent diplomatic alliances aimed at regulating the flow of trade between Asante and the Europeans on the coast. For instance, a Dutch report written in 1726 noted that the chiefs of Assin, Cabesterra, Akyem, and Abrem, as well as some Fantes and others, "have consulted together at Fetu to panyar [seize/kidnap] or sell all Ashantees who come to the beach to trade."[51] In the decades that followed this agreement, these coastal chiefs renewed their commitment.[52] Amid the ongoing wars, the Borbor Fante polity consistently survived the attacks and counterattacks plaguing the region and simultaneously gained military strength. They were well positioned to take a leading role in the formation of alliances, both military and diplomatic, and to effect compliance among neighbors with their military and commercial strategies. The most active port on the coast—Anomabo—was controlled by them, and their military strength equaled or exceeded that of other states on the coast and of some in the immediate hinterland.

By the 1720s accounts of Fante's strength and size became common. Already in 1709 the Dutch perceived the "Fantynse" as having "become rather too big." They opined that if any of the "Negroes" ought to be "reduced" (meaning attacked by armies sponsored by European companies), it should be the Fantynse.[53] Similar accounts were common from the 1720s.[54] The inhabitants of the former polities of Eguafo, Fetu, Sebu, and Agona consistently cooperated with Fante military strategies after the Fante defeat of Agona in 1724.[55] And John Atkins recognized only four main "Negro Powers" in the region in 1721: "the Emperor of Fantin" and "the Kings of Santie, Akim, and Aquamboe."[56]

The relative strength of the Borbor Fante in the wake of these wars has led some historians to view these conflicts as wars of expansion of the Borbor Fante polity. However, the nature of political power in the region showed no sign of centralized authority within Fanteland during the remainder of the eighteenth century. The outcome of Borbor Fante military victories was coalition building, not kingdom building. Unification of the coastal region was achieved through military cooperation, ritual oath taking, and the development of new cultural institutions, not by the installation of a king.

When the wars between the coastal polities diminished after 1728, struggles for control of political power and commercial influence continued in different forms. The victors of recent wars, and their close kin and dependents, staked out claims to the collection of tolls on the trade paths and the loyalty of people in areas formerly subject to the now defunct coastal polities. A rare description of such maneuvering comes from a Dutch account of 1738:

> "A certain Negro from the Fantyn country, a relative of the exiled *makelaer* Tekki, has tried to make the peoples of Great Commanie and Abremoe devoted to himself, and now makes new claims on the Elmina people. This has caused new discordance which compelled traders coming from the interior to avoid the Great Commanie and Abramboe roads, with the result that we here at Elmina have to sit back whilst there is a brisk trade in the factories along the Upper Coast."[57]

This quote indicates several important aspects of the new scramble for power in the coastal region and its immediate hinterland. First, the individual described is a "relative" of a man who was on the payroll of the Dutch West Indies Company. This suggests that he likely had connections to the transatlantic trade—probably to suppliers in the Akanny or Asante interior. The attempt to secure the "devotion" of the populations of Great Commannie (Eguafo), Abremoe (Abrem), and Elmina indicate a process of political transition whereby a person associated with the Borbor Fante ("Fantyn") appropriated the former subjects of coastal polities that had been plundered by Borbor Fante armies. It is likely that the primary focus of the appropriation was the tolls on trade caravans passing through these territories for, as the account states, the activities of the aspiring political authority caused traders to divert their traffic around Eguafo and Abrem to the lands west of the Pra River. The success or failure of the new elite depended on their ability to secure the cooperation of people in these areas in a way that restored peace (as much as possible) and allowed inland traders to pass through unaccosted.

To understand how new cooperative relationships formed between warlords and the former subjects of seventeenth-century coastal polities, it is essential to understand the nature of relationships of dependency in southern Ghana and African societies more generally. Political authority was

based on personal authority, not territorial authority, meaning that the king, or omanhen, was not the owner of the land (except perhaps stool lands to which he was entitled through his matrilineage); he was, rather, responsible for the land on behalf of the community. Heads of households, heads of lineages, and village chiefs wielded authority within a hierarchy of allegiances and obligations, at the top of which sat the omanhen. Lesser chiefs and lineage heads were expected to mobilize for war, together with their retainers or clients, when summoned by a higher-ranking authority. Military power—which was crucial to government authority in the era of the slave trade—could thus be increased only by the acquisition of a greater number of retainers or dependents, not by the seizure of lands.[58] In other words, because African societies did not have a legal system that conferred ownership of land to individuals, rights and ownership were based in people.[59]

Commoners were "acquired" by nobles through the latter's control of political offices. Commoners included peasants, hunters, herders, fishers, canoemen, salt makers, craftspeople, thatchers, woodcutters, charcoal burners, lime makers, common soldiers, hawkers and market sellers, water carriers and water sellers, ferry operators, laborers, lower-ranking priests and priestesses, astrologers, diviners, doctors, pilots, and so on.[60] They represented a source of revenue to the nobles, as well as political subjects. Commoners could become wealthy and enter the ranks of nobles, or they could become indebted or punished by the judicial system and thus become retainers, or bonded citizens of the rich and powerful.

The history of warfare and state formation in Africa must be understood in very different terms, then, from that of other parts of the globe. Warfare in Africa that resulted in the taking of human captives or the subjection of a village to a status of dependency can be seen as equivalent to British or Chinese warfare that resulted in conquest of territory.[61]

Members of the New Elite

An individual's status as an elite could be based on birth and ancestry—as had probably been the main determinant of elite status for centuries prior to the growth of transatlantic trade—or it could be the result of a monumental action or the accumulation of wealth.[62] In the latter cases, ennoblement occurred through a ceremony that was sponsored by the individual claiming noble status. Stool holders were people who had been ennobled for any of these reasons. But stools symbolized a kinship relationship between the stool holder and former leaders regardless of biological relation. The wars and seizures of trade routes in the early eighteenth century created opportunities for people to rise to noble status through victorious acts on the battlefield and accumulation of wealth from the intermediary trade in slaves and

gold. Intermarriage was another means of establishing ties of mutual obligation. For example, according to tradition the mother of Kwegya Akwa married an Asebu chief, thereby establishing kinship ties between families in the Borbor Fante towns of Anomabo and Asebu.[63]

By 1717 many caboceers on the coast were merchants who had contacts with inland merchants. Under each fort there was a small town with a caboceer, "who maintains contacts with other Natives in the interior . . . and who brings those to whom he feels most inclined to the forts to sell their gold, slaves and tusks."[64] John Cabes and John Konny were two such figures who controlled the trade west of Elmina.[65] At Cape Coast this was Birempong Kodwo (Cudjo Caboceer) and at Anomabo it was Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee).[66] This type of contact between coastal elite and inland merchants was similar to the organization of the Akani trade network of the seventeenth century.

Other leading men were military leaders, often known as "captains." These men coordinated diplomatic agreements and settled disputes with European agents. For instance, in 1716 the Anomabo people were in a dispute with the English and shut off the fort from receiving provisions, firewood, and communications. The English prepared to do battle with the townspeople, but peace was made through negotiation with a local military captain. The "Captain of the Town" turned over a relative or member of his household (a "cousin") as a pledge, "on condition of his being paid 4 oz. [worth of trade goods] yearly."[67] It is unclear whether the pledge was to be paid four ounces as an employee of the fort, or whether the captain was to be paid the four ounces as security for the peace agreement.

Elite status in the early eighteenth century was determined by the amount of wealth, number of retainers, and political offices held by an individual—it was also increasingly determined by military power. In the seventeenth century all the different types of nobles were in all the coastal states. According to Kea, "The various noble families in a given oman were linked in different ways: by marriage alliances and by relations of clientage and 'vassalage'; not infrequently, affined ties linked a royal family of one polity with that of another. . . . At the same time there was rivalry and conflict among the noble families over, for example, revenue-producing administrative units. Political intrigue, feuds, court litigations, assassinations, and revolts were the means by which competing families sought to attain their objective."[68] In the eighteenth century, these rivalries intensified and became a regional concern, while new links and clientage relationships formed.

Oral traditions offer a useful indigenous interpretation of coastal government and political offices prior to the nineteenth century but pose problems for scholars seeking to understand the nature of elite status in the eighteenth-century Gold Coast. Because most oral traditions were collected in the twentieth century, at a time when traditional authority was understood primarily in terms of "paramount chiefs" and "subchiefs"—terms that made

sense to British colonial officers charged with managing so-called Native Affairs—these traditions tend to conflate diverse political offices into one notion of "chiefship." By contrast, the eighteenth-century records clearly differentiate among holders of political offices, elders, military leaders, priests, and individuals who played key roles in coalition affairs due simply to their personal wealth. Adding to the confusion of terminology in the existing historiography, Fynn coined the term "Mfantse Ahemfo Nhyiamu," which he translated as the "Fante Council of Chiefs," to refer to the coastal government as it existed prior to the colonial period.[69] This title is a misnomer because it does not take into account the fact that chiefs were not the only prominent leaders. His view imposes an anachronistic sense of chiefly privilege that was more true in the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth.

The records created by observers of the eighteenth-century Gold Coast show that the first half of that century was an era in which men who held status for various reasons—military accomplishments, status within a clan, spiritual power, or personal wealth—attended meetings together to decide policies for the central coast as a whole. Throughout the 1700s European correspondence frequently referred to meetings of the "principal people of Fante" at various places within Fanteland. These meetings normally occurred at the onset of a military invasion or counterinvasion.[70] However, they appear to have served nonmilitary functions as well, such as establishing laws and taking judicial action.[71] The Anomabo Fort daybooks report meetings of "pynins and caboceers" to "establish laws" and "hold a council about pawns," for example.[72] In general, then, these leaders met to formulate military strategies and delegate power among themselves in various ways.

The traditional symbol of political authority in this region was the stool. The golden stool of Asante is the best known. Many others have existed in every town and village in southern Ghana for centuries. A stool holder has the support of the ancestors in leading the people who are protected by the stool. In the colonial period, stool holders clamored for independent or "paramount" status within the British system of Indirect Rule.[73] As David Henige has shown, while stool holding has been assumed by many to traditionally require succession within a royal matrilineal clan, there is little evidence that such a rigid system was ever actually used.[74] "Akan stool politics were primarily power politics—that is, the ability to exert power as well as authority was at least as important as the weight of perceived tradition."[75] Members of the new elite may or may not have been stool holders; moreover, the eighteenth century was a period when stools could be acquired with or without lineage affiliation.

The coastal elite constantly created and recreated networks of alliance in the eighteenth century by which they protected one another from enemy advances. When one omanhen was attacked, the *amanhenfuo* (sing. omanhen) who had been allied with the vanquished omanhen prior to the attack

came together to punish the invader.[76] Military strategy was the immediate cause of forums, at which other matters were also discussed.

Commoner Armies and the Growth of Anomabo

An essential aspect of the rise to power of the new elite was the transformation of the military forces of southern Ghana in the early eighteenth century. During the decades of incessant warfare in the early 1700s, the royal military forces of small coastal polities disappeared and were replaced by armies of citizens. Kea's research has shown that the nature of military institutions across southern and central Ghana transformed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Slaves and other subordinate members of royal families constituted the main military forces in the seventeenth century. The masses of free commoners were either not recruited in wartime, or were subject to low levels of mobilization, since commoners primarily met society's demand for agricultural production and other types of nonmilitary labor during this period. During the seventeenth century the productive labor of peasants was "deemed more important in the eyes of the *abirempon* and *afahene* [nobles and chiefs]," than their potential use in military activities, Kea argues.[77] This system remained dominant in the coastal states for most of the seventeenth century, but by the eighteenth century the mobilization of free commoners in times of war became typical. Slave labor and the labor of other kinds of retainers were largely diverted toward agricultural production and other nonmilitary services required by the elite.

This change was part of a larger process whereby imperial state systems—especially the interior states of Denkyira, Akwamu, and Asante—gradually replaced smaller autonomous kingdoms during the second half of the 1600s. The shift to commoner armies was an essential part of the political changes occurring in the coastal towns in the eighteenth century because new networks of political authority were forming around military partnerships. The asafo companies on the coast were attached to town wards, or quarters. This was an "urban phenomenon," according to Kea, that was linked to coastal growth and the development of towns. Towns were divided into wards that were on the one hand the "basic administrative, economic, and social units of the towns," and at the same time the "primary urban military units."[78]

The existing scholarship on asafo companies has overlooked the impact of the growth of the Atlantic slave trade on the formation of the asafo system. The evolution of asafo companies has rather been treated as somehow mysterious. For example, Harvey Feinberg has concluded that the origin of the asafo military system is "one of the more interesting *problems* in the history of southern Ghana."[79] In general, scholars interested in asafo have focused on other aspects of the institution to the neglect of its evolution during the era of the Atlantic slave trade.[80]

The military forces fighting under the rising warlords such as Kwegya Akwa were a fundamental building block in the formation of a coalition government on the coast and the establishment of a secure intermediary trade during the eighteenth century. Unlike the late seventeenth-century wars, in which fighting was frequently influenced by Europeans and involved mercenaries or hired armies, the wars of the eighteenth century were spawned from local ambitions of warlords and merchants who could recruit men only by offering protection. Asafo companies developed in ways that protected and reinforced communities at the local level, even as they provided a large regional military force for the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century. The development of the asafo military system allowed for the flexible structure of the Coastal Coalition, which would not have been possible under centralized rule. Like the asafo system, the coalition developed in such a way that political grouping was defined by context—in the event of a mutual attack, political allegiance was to the larger unit; at other times political allegiance was local.

Another critical factor in the formation of the Coastal Coalition was the growth of Anomabo as a market for the Atlantic slave trade. The wars of the first three decades of the eighteenth century would not have resulted in the formation of a coalition government on the Gold Coast if not for the commercial activity at the town of Anomabo during those years. The growth of Anomabo's transatlantic commerce provided a crucial source of revenue and military resources for the Borbor Fante and the emergent coastal coalition. Wealth and military supplies (especially guns and gunpowder) were essential components of political authority in the early eighteenth century Gold Coast. The Borbor Fante gained an advantage over their neighbors in the first three decades of the eighteenth century because of the exceptional volume of trade at Anomabo, which ensured a steady source of wealth and military supplies. The Borbor Fante expanded their trade at Anomabo at the same time that they were taking control of the caravan routes formerly used by the Akani. The combination of increased participation in transatlantic trade and greater control over hinterland markets and trade paths gave them the upper hand in the coastal wars and the formation of new relationships of dependency among coastal elites.

European observers on the Ghana coast in the early years of the eighteenth century observed that the growing slave trade at Anomabo enabled the Borbor Fante to expand their patrols on trade paths, direct the inland trade away from European forts, and manipulate European agents residing in the forts. The Dutch director-general argued that the success of the Borbor Fantes's trade at Anomabo empowered them to break contracts with the Europeans and to demand increasingly expensive gifts from them. The trade carried on by the English ships there was very profitable to the Fantes and "gave them occasion to prefer their own interest above the duties they owe to our Companies [English and Dutch]." He also noted the connection between the Anomabo slave trade

and violence in the interior, commenting that the Anomabo trade "must also have been the principal cause for their kidnapping, like highwaymen, of many innocent people in the forest, whom they sold afterwards."[81]

Establishing a Border with Asante

By the 1730s the new elite had established a degree of internal cooperation that enabled them to make important alliances and fight wars against neighboring powers. The political map of southern Ghana had fewer polities in this decade than it did at the dawn of the 1700s, because the small polities had either been incorporated into the Asante Kingdom or had joined the Coastal Coalition, which had emerged as a regional actor in this period, no longer divided into autonomous local units when matters related to war or Atlantic commerce arose.[82] The reign of Opoku Ware and his expansion of the Asante Kingdom have been the prevailing themes in Gold Coast historiography of the 1720s to 1740s. For the coast, however, the 1730s and 1740s were characterized by the formation of alliances between the coastal polities and those in the immediate hinterland.

The Coastal Coalition established diplomatic and military alliances with the three inland polities to its immediate north—Twifo, Wassa, and Akyem—in an effort to defend the borders it shared with these kingdoms and to maintain control of the trade paths that joined them with the coast. The competitive nature of the coalition's relations with Twifo, Wassa, and Akyem was evident in eruptions of violence throughout this period, yet feuds alternated with periods in which Twifo, Wassa, and Akyem each allied with the coalition in defensive strategies against Asante. Meanwhile, under the leadership of Opoku Ware, Asante continued to increase its military and slave trading activities in these two decades, posing a threat to the sovereignty of all of the polities south of Kumase.

An important turning point in Gold Coast politico-military affairs was the Asante invasion of Akyem and Accra in 1742. By defeating Akyem and Accra, Asante broke through the blockade previously formed against it by the coastal polities and gained direct access to the coast through Accra. With Asante in control of the Ga polities at Accra, the alliance that had existed among the Ga and coastal polities was broken. Alliances among Wassa, Twifo, and the Coastal Coalition were strengthened. Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer, a Danish trader who lived and worked on the Ghana coast between 1739 and 1749, observed that after 1742, "the Fantes went on to form an alliance with all the nations lying between the coast and Assiante, to stop Oppoccu's people from coming to the coast in [*sic*] to buy gunpowder and muskets. All the nations west of Fante joined this alliance." Rømer also noted that in 1745, the Asante tried to access trade at Elmina but Opoku

Ware and his army "were beaten and taken prisoner by the Fantes and the surrounding nations."[83]

The new alliance formed among the southern polities ensured that commerce between Asante and the ports west of Accra passed through the hands of coastal intermediaries for much of the remaining years of the transatlantic slave trade on the Gold Coast.[84] As a result of this blockade, the Kumase-Accra road was Asante's only route of direct access to the coast until 1780, when a route to Appolonia was established in the western Gold Coast.[85] As a Dutch source noted in 1764,

> So long as this alliance lasts, there is no hope of a passage through for the Ashantis, as the self-interest and policy of the allied peoples involve the closing of the ways, as the Ashantis are now obliged to deliver the slaves to them whom they sell at great profit at the waterside; a profit which would soon cease if the Ashantis could come through themselves.[86]

Asante's expansion southward thus secured the kingdom's direct access to trade on the coast at Accra and caused the Coastal Coalition to establish key alliances with inland states lying between Fanteland and Asante.[87] The Coastal Coalition also deepened its relationship with the English trading company on the coast in the second half of the eighteenth century to counteract the growing commercial power of Asante.

Under the rule of Opoku Ware from circa 1720 to 1750, then, all of the autonomous polities in the area of present-day Ghana, with the sole exception of the Coastal Coalition, felt the sting of conquest by Asante. The preceding account of the formation of the Coastal Coalition and the rise to an elite status of numerous Borbor Fante warlords within it diverges sharply from prior explanations of the political change on the Gold Coast in the early eighteenth century. I have argued that the Borbor Fante did not seek territorial expansion; rather the destruction of the old royal systems, together with the development of a new military system and African-controlled trade at Anomabo, created opportunities for the rise of new leaders who shared power in a decentralized state. The Coastal Coalition was ultimately a creation of warlords, spiritual leaders, and merchants who found new ways to accomplish two critical government functions: offering protection to the coastal population and maintaining an intermediary role in the trade between Asante and the Europeans on the coast.

Part 2: The Mature Coalition (c. 1750–1807)

The developments of the first half of the eighteenth century resulted in what can suitably be called the mature Coastal Coalition by the 1750s. During the

second half of the eighteenth century, and up to 1807, political and military elites in the lands between Komenda and Agona cooperated in a shared effort to defend and govern that territory. The elite did not wage war on each other but rather joined forces in wars against Asante and other neighboring states. The wars and negotiations of previous decades resulted in a reconfigured politico-military structure in the mature Coastal Coalition, or what contemporary observers called the "Fantee Nation." This section treats the period from 1750 to 1807 as a whole—not in chronological sequence—assessing the nature of the Coastal Coalition as a governing body in what we might call its "golden age." The Coastal Coalition had a decentralized structure in which numerous individuals played essential governing roles. Some attention is also given to the internal tensions and conflicts that challenged the cooperative efforts of the coalition leaders as a governing body.

The boundaries of the Coastal Coalition in its mature phase were largely determined by the limits of Asante rule in the region. Under Asantehene Opoku Ware, the Asante Kingdom had established direct access to the Atlantic coast at Accra in 1742. On the windward stretch of the Gold Coast, west of the River Pra, Asante also had a strong influence as a result of its conquest of Denkyira in 1701. Only the coast between the Pra River and Accra remained free of Asante controls on trade and tribute. The Pra and Accra thus quite clearly marked the western and eastern limits, respectively, of the Coastal Coalition's territory, although one notable exception was the town of Elmina.

The northern boundary between the Coastal Coalition and Asante fluctuated dramatically throughout the eighteenth century because the people inhabiting the lands between coalition and Asante spheres of influence repeatedly resisted incorporation into the Asante Kingdom. The hinterland polities of Wassa, Twifo, and Akyem and the smaller polities of Abrem and Cabesterra became battlegrounds on which Asante forces continued fighting to extend the Asantehene's rule southward toward the coast. The rulers of Wassa, Twifo, and Akyem frequently defended their territories with the support of Coastal Coalition forces in this period, as they had in the 1730s and 1740s. All of these states succumbed to invasions by Asante, but they continued to buck Asante overrule up to the final conquest of the central coast by Asante in 1807.[88] A particularly intense struggle occurred between Asante and Wassa during the 1780s.[89] Asante aggression in the lands separating it from the Coastal Coalition was impeded throughout this period by other military engagements necessary for Asante's own survival. Most notably, in 1764 Asante was attacked from the east by combined forces from Oyo and Dahomey.[90]

What was really at stake in the wars on the northern frontier of the Coastal Coalition was control of the north-south intermediary trade between Asante and the coast. Market centers at Assin Manso and in the vicinity of Twifo Praso were situated along the two main roads connecting Kumase and the principal slave-trading centers on the coast.[91] At these markets, slave merchants

Figure 3.2. Assin Manso, site of the river known as Donko Nsuo (Slave River), where enslaved Africans are said to have bathed before their final walk to the Atlantic coast. Photograph by author, 2009.

from Asante sold their slaves to another set of merchants who took them to the coast. As Governor Mutter explained in 1764, "regular markets have been settled on the borders of the Fantee Country where the Warsaws, Akims and several others keep up a constant intercourse between the Ashantee and Fantee Country."[92] Captives purchased in markets such as Assin Manso were the main source of slaves sold at the three busiest slave markets on the coast: Anomabo, Cape Coast, and Elmina.[93] In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the transatlantic slave trade was at its peak and the prices paid for human captives on the West African coast were climbing, control of the slave markets was worth much more than the rights to land and tribute that might come with territorial conquest. The Coastal Coalition offered military assistance to Wassa, Twifo, and Akyem in exchange for their neighbors' cooperation in securing these inland markets from Asante control. The Coastal Coalition thereby defended its control of trade passing from market centers such as Assin Manso.

Political power within the Coastal Coalition was centered on the original settlements of the Borbor Fante, at Mankessim and Abura. Contemporary documents refer to large gatherings of chiefs, priests, and military leaders at these sites during episodes of warfare and trade blockades in the latter

half of the eighteenth century, which probably accounts for the continued use of the name "Fantee" in those documents. A third politically important town was Anomabo, whose amanhenfuo—Eno Baisie Kurentsi (1740–64) and Amonu Kuma I (1770–1801)—increasingly placed themselves at the forefront of negotiations between the coalition and the British company, on the one hand, and the Asantehene, on the other. The leaders in Anomabo were in regular dialogue with the African leaders in Cape Coast—most notably Birempong Kodwo, and therefore had relatively up-to-date information about the activities of the British company.

The distribution of particular gifts intended for the most powerful political authorities on the Gold Coast demonstrated the centrality of Anomabo in coalition government. A special shipment from England containing gifts intended for the political elite on the Gold Coast arrived at Cape Coast in 1788. The items to be delivered to African authorities included horses' tails, chairs, sandals, and "kettle drums" from Europe. These items were distributed equally among five individuals: Aggery, Botty, Amonu Kuma, Coffee Accrassie, and Quashie.[94] The first two individuals were company's caboceers (prominent local Africans who received a salary from the European trade companies) in Cape Coast. Coffee (Kofi) Accrassie appears to have been a caboceer at Accra, where the British had a large fort and where they competed directly with the Dutch and Danish companies, who also maintained large forts there. The other two individuals were the principal caboceer of Anomabo (Amonu Kuma) and his likely successor (Quashie/Kwesi), who was employed at that time as the linguist at Anomabo Fort.[95] In addition to these payments, others were made to the "principal captain," or asafo leader, in each of eight towns.

The Coastal Coalition was the only polity in southern Ghana that had not been incorporated into the Asante Kingdom by 1750, and it was constantly engaged with the Asante Kingdom politically, commercially, and militarily throughout the second half of the eighteenth century and up to the time of Asante's invasion of the coast in 1807.

Constellation of Power within the Coastal Coalition

The Coastal Coalition was led by a constellation of elite individuals including political office holders, warlords, elders, merchants, and priests. The elite resided in towns across the coalition's territory and met regularly to deliberate on matters affecting the region as a whole, especially wars, blockades, and boycotts. This section explores the structure of power in this decentralized but highly organized political entity as revealed by descriptions of the coalition government and its leading members by contemporary observers, the account books of the English Company of Merchants, and ethnographic data.

It is very difficult to define the Coastal Coalition in precise political terms, given the nature of the sources available for the study of it. Some of the leading men of the coalition were well known to Europeans on the coast and were described in contemporary written accounts in some detail. Others—particularly those residing in the hinterland—were clearly less well known to Europeans. We know about them only through the messengers they sent to European forts. European sources provide valuable information about some aspects of the organization and operation of political power in the Coastal Coalition, but the terminology used by European authors reflect eighteenth-century European understandings of governments and political offices more than they do African ones.

It should be noted, however, that political ideology in early modern Europe included notions of the state that were still far from the narrow sense of a nation-state that developed in more recent times. As Steve Hindle has demonstrated, the state in early modern England, for example, was one that featured widespread participation in governance by "middling" social groups. It was also a political system in which judicial power was shared by local officials and not simply centered in Westminster.[96]

A Decentralized Government

The Coastal Coalition was certainly a decentralized governing body, in the sense that it had no single central ruler, such as a king, nor a single ruling family. The documentary evidence from 1750 to 1807 shows, rather, that matters of trade and relations with Asante or European companies were negotiated among many individuals within the coalition. The leadership of the coalition lived in and represented different parts of the coalition territory. Some held political titles; some were military leaders; some were wealthy traders; and some were spiritual leaders, or *akomfuo*. European observers sometimes compared the coalition government to contemporary forms of government in Europe. These accounts collectively confirm that the coalition was not a monarchy and that a variety of "nobles" participated in its operations.

Thomas Melvil took a keen interest in the government of the central coast after he arrived at Cape Coast in 1751 to run the newly formed Company of Merchants. His description emphasizes the way in which the Coastal Coalition was a collective of distinct parts:

> The Accomfee Fantees and the Bura Bura Fantees . . . are neither under the same circumstances in point of Union as the Switzers of Grisons, nor as the United Provinces of Holland. I call their connexion a federal union for want of better expression; it's an union formed on manners, custom, and religion for they are under the same subjection to the father (or god) of Fantee as the western Fantees are.[97]

Paul Erdman Isert, a German physician employed at the Danish fort at Accra, described the government of the central coast, which he called "Fanthee," in these terms:

> Fanthee is also a republic [like Krobbo], but one of considerable size. It stretches along the coast from Akra, from which it is separated by a very large lagoon called the "Akra lagoon." Most of the Dutch and English forts lie in the Fanthee district.[98]

The treaties made between the coalition and other polities were sometimes ratified in the European forts, providing documentation of the personnel involved in these important political affairs. The appearance of representatives from diverse parts of the coalition territory suggests why men such as Isert considered it to be a "republic of considerable size." For instance, when the coalition formed an alliance with Wassa in 1765, participants on the Fante side included men representing Twifo, Eguafo, Komenda, Fetu, and Cape Coast as well as Anomabo, Agya, and Mankessim.[99]

When the British company signed one treaty with coalition leaders, representatives of Ekumfi declared themselves—or, more accurately, were described by an English-speaking scribe—to be members of a larger Fante political interest in the 1750s. The treaty stated that the representatives were part of "the body of people called the Fantee Nation" and that they were authorized to make an oath on its behalf, "that we are and ought to be considered as Fantees."[100]

The large number of individuals involved in government and diplomatic affairs in the Coastal Coalition can also be seen in the documents pertaining to disputes between Asante and the coalition in the 1760s. The British Company of Merchants sent dashees to the representatives who assembled in 1766 to negotiate a treaty to end a series of wars between Asante and the coalition. The Cape Coast daybooks from the year 1766 list the following payments:

> Pynins & Cabboceers of Fantee assembled: 30 gallons rum, 16 fathoms tobacco, 1 groce 15 inch pipes [total value] £19 . . . 12.

> Public Orator: 2 gallons rum, 2 fathoms tobacco, / 12 gr. 15 inch pipes [total value] £1 . . . 11.[101]

In addition to these payments, the group as a whole was sent another fifteen gallons of rum on October 18.

The special place of Anomabo elites within the Coastal Coalition is indicated by a separate payment made to them on October 25 in connection with the same treaty:

> The Cabboceers & Pynins of Annamaboe assembled with the rest of the Fantees to treat of peace with the Ashantee Messengers: 16 lbs leaf tobacco, / 6 groce 15 inch pipes [total value] £1 . . . 2.[102]

The distribution of valuable gifts among several prominent men who influenced trade and politics in several towns spread over many miles of coastline demonstrates the decentralized structure of political authority in the coastal region and the necessity of the English trading company, among others, to interact with numerous coastal leaders rather than one Fante "king." This stands in marked contrast with the case of Asante, where political authority ultimately resided in the hands of one man, the Asantehene. While the Asante Kingdom was clearly run by a large number of powerful chiefs (*ahene*) and bureaucrats, the king ruled above all of these.[103] From the point of view of the English trading company, diplomacy with the Asante Kingdom was relatively straightforward—gifts and messengers could be sent directly to Kumase for the Asantehene. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Asantehene had an emissary based directly on the coast, comparable in some ways to the yovogan or "Chief of the Whites," who handled the slave trade on the coast of Dahomey on behalf of its king.[104] Gaining the cooperation of coastal leaders, on the other hand, required a careful assessment of who were the leading men in several locations in the coastal region. The decentralized and sometimes fluctuating nature of political authority on the coast in some ways mirrored the structure of transatlantic trade on the Gold Coast, where no single company or group of traders had lasting dominance, and prices and commodities changed frequently.[105]

Another indication of the decentralized nature of political power on the coast is the fact that the Asante defeat of the Coastal Coalition in 1807 specifically targeted three towns: Abura, Mankessim, and Anomabo. Abura was a frequent meeting place for the leaders of the coalition and an inland town on the main trade route connecting Anomabo to Kumase; Mankessim was the historical and spiritual center of the Borbor Fante; and Anomabo was the hub of Atlantic trade for the coalition. Commentators noted that in defeating these three towns, the Asantehene, "cut his way through the heart of the Fantee country."[106]

Interpreted in eighteenth-century European terms, then, these accounts confirm that the government of the central coast was not a monarchy and was therefore fundamentally different from the centralized organization of the Asante Kingdom, which shared the Borbor Fantes' Akan cultural-linguistic roots. Yet the Asante Kingdom before 1807 bore many similarities to the Coastal Coalition. The polities or *aman* that had composed the political landscape prior to the ascension of Osei Tutu to the position of king of greater Asante continued to function as component parts of the Asante Kingdom. The chiefs of the various aman consulted with the Asantehene,

and their opinions were considered essential to the kingdom's policies. Fynn emphasizes the federative nature of Asante in this period by referring to it as the "Asante Union." He argues that Asante was fundamentally a *military union* in the era of Osei Tutu, and developed reforms that altered the military nature of Asante authority only after the death of Asantehene Osei Kwadwo in 1777.[107] Yet the absence of a single ruler of Fanteland remains an undeniable marker of the different organizational structures of these two polities.

Further analysis of the similarities and differences between Asante and the Coastal Coalition as politico-military bodies in the eighteenth century is needed to unravel the tangled arguments hitherto presented about the distinctiveness of Akan culture. Some historians of Asante have emphasized the uniquely hegemonic nature of Asante government and the divine sanction that gave the Asantehene the power to rule his subjects.[108] Certainly the golden stool and Odwira festival did set Asante apart from the Coastal Coalition because they ceremoniously reinforced the supreme power of the king among the chiefs, elders, and military commanders of the kingdom. But the early phases of state formation in Asante and on the coast deserve closer comparative analysis.

Ritual Oath Taking

One of the ways that the coastal elite ensured mutual loyalty among themselves was through the regular practice of taking ritual oaths of allegiance.[109] Oaths have been used by societies worldwide—and especially those in which written communication was absent—to reinforce verbal agreements with spiritual or divine power. In southern Ghana, people took oaths for different reasons, but especially as a way of swearing that they were speaking the truth or making a promise with the greatest sincerity. Moreover, when agreements were made with an oath, or when oaths were invoked in disputes, the matter necessarily came under the jurisdiction of local political authorities. Taking an oath normally involved drinking water or some other liquid, and it was believed that the drink would cause injury or death to the person drinking it if he or she did not speak the truth or follow through on a promise.[110] As Thomas Thompson describes, "They say before they drink it to this effect: may the fetish kill them by that Draught, if they take it in a false matter; or, if to bind themselves to conditions, if they do not duly execute and perform the same."[111] The act of "drinking fetish" while making an oath was believed to call the gods to witness.[112]

In the context of the Coastal Coalition, important decisions related to war or disputes were ratified by all of the principal men involved when they took an oath or, in the parlance of the time, "drank fetish" on it. The accounts of the British Company of Merchants frequently mention these oaths because it was customary for some or all of the African notables to visit Cape Coast

Castle after taking an oath to receive gifts (usually alcohol). These visits to the British headquarters both notified the British of the decision reached by the coalition and ensured that a sufficient supply of alcohol was readily available for any subsequent gift giving or celebrating by African elites.[113]

Conflict and Tension within the Coastal Coalition

The cooperative nature of relations among political and military elites within the Coastal Coalition was frequently challenged by conflicts that erupted between them. Given the decentralized and militarized nature of the coalition, it should not be surprising that the elite had frequent disputes among themselves. Governor Mill's statement in 1772 that the various parts of Fanteland were "always at war amongst themselves" exaggerates the extent of conflict but accurately reflects the fact that conflicts frequently erupted between groups within the coalition.[114] Usually referred to in European records as "palavers," disputes within or between coastal towns could involve days of violence and even deaths.

The larger coastal towns of Anomabo, Komenda, and Cape Coast were divided into two sections—Lower Town, the area on the waterfront, and Upper Town, the section of town farther inland and on higher ground.[115] Palavers between the two sections of towns erupted regularly. The two sections of Cape Coast were fighting each other brutally in 1780.[116] When Richard Brew died (1776), there was a "revolution" at Anomabo.[117] English officials on the coast speculated that there would be a revolution when Eno Baisie Kurentsi died as well.[118] In 1715 the British factor at Anomabo Fort reported that sixty houses were burned in the context of a feud between two groups within that town who were firing guns at each other on the beach.[119] Sometimes the feuds between upper and lower towns involved "company's slaves," who were members of the Lower Town community. In the 1770s "four or five" such "employees" from Cape Coast Castle were killed in a dispute between the upper and lower towns.[120]

These feuds can be seen as a natural result of the militarization of coastal society on the Gold Coast and across much of West and West Central Africa. As one observer explained, it was understood that, sometimes, "matters were come to such a pitch that the mastery must at once be decided by arms."[121] In such an event, the women and children would be secured in a European fort or elsewhere, if possible, before the violence began.[122] These localized violent clashes were understood to be inevitable and necessary by those involved. The English report of 1779 noted that the caboceers insisted that the "evil Day" could be delayed but not avoided—it was inevitable. And the English governor simply noted that "in the end," the dispute would "be the means of establishing a lasting peace" among the two parts of the town.[123]

Other types of conflicts occurred between political authorities from different parts of Fanteland. For example, in 1752 Fante leaders were "divided" and not willing to engage in war when it seemed inevitable between Asante and Wassa.[124] Many of the conflicts within Fanteland developed around personal rivalries between the wealthiest and most powerful individuals. The chiefs of Anomabo competed openly with other Fante leaders. Eno Baisie Kurentsi, for example, took note of the gifts presented to Birempong Kodwo by the British company and complained bitterly when his own gifts from the company were less valuable than those presented to his peer, particularly since Kodwo was his junior in age.[125] Kurentsi was known to have many enemies, and he sometimes needed protection for himself and his family against these enemies, as noted in the following account:

> [Currantee] hath for a long course of years behaved so arbitrary among the Fanteens, so inhumanly to his own people and been guilty of such injustices that finding age grow powerfully upon him and *every body not only his enemy but resolved one day or other to take advantage of his family*, is determined at all events to establish a fort at Annamaboa for the defence of them and himself and in this affair will give particular preference to the English, which if they reject or don't shotly embrace, he is determined at all events (for the reasons aforesaid) to give the French or Portugeez the opportunity, whereby the trade will be rendered the property and right of such Forreigners as any o' the English merchants.[126]

Kurentsi on at least one occasion vetoed a decision made by the general body of Fante leaders. In 1751 Melvil tried to attract more slave trading to Cape Coast by lowering the price of slaves. Subsequently, the "Fantees" responded by passing a law to boycott the supply of slaves to Cape Coast, but Kurentsi intervened to ensure that Cape Coast would not be cut off.[127] Amonu Kuma, Kurentsi's successor, had similar rivalries with other Fante chiefs. He demanded equivalent gifts when he heard of caboceers receiving some from the British.[128]

There is also some evidence to suggest that conflicts may have emerged between political and spiritual leaders. Melvil tried to influence the Fantes's decision about allowing the French to take up trade at Anomabo in 1751 by sending Birempong Kodwo to make a proposal to "a meeting of the Fantee nation" but secretly also promised a large cash award to the priests of "the God of that Country" (Nananom Mpow) if they could effect the desired outcome.[129] This example suggests that the interests of the political leaders and the spiritual leaders—who were politically powerful members of the coalition in their own right—could be at odds.

A source of conflict up to the 1760s was the northern border. The most infamous example is the rivalry between Ntsiful, the King of Wassa, and the Fantes. In 1760 an army of three thousand Wassas attacked and plundered Abrem.[130] The invasion resulted in burned villages, the deaths of several,

and the capture of three hundred to four hundred prisoners. During the attack, the Fantes—though presumed allies of the Abrems—were "picking up every stragler they could catch that they might by selling or keeping them till redeemed by their masters get something in the worst of times."[131]

Political Offices and Titles

European sources reveal limited but nevertheless insightful details about the various individuals who participated in the day-to-day management of trade and diplomacy on the coast and the categories of elites involved in government. The most commonly used titles referring to African political offices in European records and correspondence were caboceer, panyin, braffo, and king. These titles were used by Europeans in imprecise and inconsistent ways, revealing the limited comprehension possible for foreign observers, as well as the changing forms and meanings of political office within coastal societies. Such as they are, the contemporary documents show something of what Europeans observed and understood about the structure of power in the Coastal Coalition. They knew which individuals commanded gestures of respect—usually cash gifts or the equivalent—to initiate a meeting in which leaders could change trade policies or practices. They also knew which individuals to favor to influence the coalition's decision-making process in a particular way, usually to favor one company's trade over that of its competitors. They also knew which individuals were capable of mustering the force to sabotage forts or seize canoes or messengers.

While specific women are not mentioned in European accounts among leading individuals in the Coastal Coalition, it should not be assumed that women were not involved at the highest levels of political authority.[132] The near-absence of women in the European documents could reflect early modern European notions of gender roles or simply a lack of accurate information among European agents on the coast. More importantly, oral traditions and ethnographic research make clear that women have traditionally been involved in political, spiritual, and commercial life in southern Ghana, particularly as queen mothers, priestesses, and traders.[133] The following analysis of leading individuals in the Coastal Coalition does not mention specific women because of a lack of documentary evidence, not because they are presumed not to have played significant roles in eighteenth-century coastal history.

Table 3.1, which appears in the Anomabo Fort daybooks as a summary of payments for the twelve-month period from December 1752 to December 1753, shows that the most powerful men in Anomabo at that time were the principal caboceer, Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee), and the Anomabo caboceers. The number of caboceers can be estimated at roughly twenty, based on a treaty signed in 1753 by numerous authorities representing the

Table 3.1. Payments from Anomabo Fort to Africans, December 1752 to December 1753

	Alcohol (gallons)	Tobacco (pounds or fathoms)	Cloth (pieces or yards)
John Currantee	310	66 pounds and 9 fathoms	6 pieces and 11 yards
Currantee's household and soldiers	34	—	1 piece
Anomabo caboceers	207	30 pounds and 2 fathoms	—
Anomabo townspeople	90	—	—
Fishing Town caboceers and townspeople	52	2 fathoms	—
Braffo, curranteers, and priests of Fante	20	—	—
Agya caboceers, pynins, townspeople	36	2 fathoms	2 yards
Other individuals	532	100 pounds and 30 fathoms	7 pieces and 20 yards

Source: Anomabo Fort daybook, T70/985, PRO.

Coastal Coalition.[134] The "other individuals" category can be presumed to refer primarily to traders coming from outside of Anomabo to trade in its markets. Other similar entries in the British account books, which note gatherings of large numbers of leaders and gifts distributed among them, reinforce the fact of the plural nature of political authority. For example, in 1753 a gift was sent from Anomabo Fort to "the Caboceers pynins &c at a meeting held concerning establishing laws."[135]

The European accounts of political offices and prominent men on the Gold Coast utilized a set of terms that are in many ways unique to the eighteenth-century Gold Coast and therefore require some explanation here. It is not readily apparent, for example, what meanings European writers might have attributed to titles such as "king of the town," "head Captain," "gold-taker," "public orator," "priest," and "the Principals of the town." Some of these terms have obvious mercantile, military, or religious implications, while others are more vague. What was the hierarchical structure of these positions? Where did political authority and spiritual authority overlap? To what extent were political authorities involved in the commercial activities of the slave trade?

The most commonly used term by which Europeans referred to African elite was *caboceer* (*cabocero*, *cabasheer*). From the Portuguese *cabeceira*, meaning "head," the term came to be used by Europeans of all nationalities to refer to African men of influence on the Gold Coast by the seventeenth century. A caboceer could be the holder of a political title within an African kingdom or of a high-ranking African employee in a European establishment on the coast.[136]

The term *caboceer* was regularly used in European documents as a catch-all term to indicate high status, in general, when the author lacked a more precise understanding of, or terminology for, an individual's proper title or position. For example, an entry in the Cape Coast Castle daybook dated November 27, 1765, records the assemblage of twenty-two coastal leaders at the castle, listing all but one as a cabboceer.[137] Given the context of the visit to the castle, however, it is clear that these leaders included the highest-ranking political authorities from the coastal area between Komenda and Agya, as well as those from Wassa, Twifo, and Abrem. These men had just concluded many days of negotiations following a massive invasion by Asante, in which thousands of people were enslaved and former allies had fought against one another.[138] As was common practice on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century, they had come to the castle at the conclusion of their negotiations to collect a gift or payment from the company, marking the occasion of this weighty negotiation.[139] Ten men are identified by the British simply by name and listed as "Cabboceer at Annamaboe," without any mention of their political or military rank. Other documents from the same period show that some Europeans were aware of the specialized roles and titles of coastal leaders—including titles such as "Captain," "Bush trader," "King," "considerable trader," "linguist," "Head Pynin [elder]," "Priest," and "gold taker."

The line between political authorities and merchants was sometimes blurred, at least to European eyes. For example, in 1794 the Anomabo Fort daybook recorded the following:

> Gave Amony Coomah, Yellow Joe, Fat Sam, Cobeah & other gentlemen of consequence in this town, Anashan & Agah offering their services & assuring me they would protect the fort & cause a good watch to be kept along the beach to look out for the Enemy [French ships], 154 gallons rum, 2/3 barrel gunpowder = £85.[140]

All of these men were treated as "gentlemen of consequence," but some were political authorities (Amonu Kuma, for example) while others were purely merchant elite (Fat Sam, Yellow Joe).

While the title of caboceer was used somewhat indiscriminately, it usually connoted someone who had the hallmarks of what has been called, in more recent decades, chiefly authority (in the sense of "traditional" African

chiefs). The following explanation of the nature of a caboceer's authority summarizes common knowledge among employees of the British company who lived on the Gold Coast in the latter half of the 1700s:

> That a Cabbocier is appointed by the people of any town as Chief Magistrate & to reign over them and that the forts have nothing to do with the appointments of such Cabbociers. That the possesser of a stool (whose heir a Cabbocier is) has full power over the natives and to make war & peace as he and the pepins may chuse. And to make any palaver with the neighbouring nations without consulting the Governor of Annamaboe Fort. That the natives of Annamaboe receive no protection from that fort only in case of an invasion from foreign powers, and then they apply to the Fort for assistance. . . . That the persons of the Cabbociers and Pynins are considered sacred.[141]

This description highlights the essentially democratic process of the appointment of chiefs in precolonial southern Ghana, as well as the ways in which a caboceer's status might involve aspects of judicial, military, diplomatic, and spiritual authority.

The account books of the Company of Merchants show that caboceers were men who often had a claim to a salary from the company (or more than one company!). For instance, in 1764 "Burah Cumah Coffee principal Cabboceer & *Captain* of Abrah, having solicited to be taken into the Company's service, & being a man of very considerable consequence in Fantee," was added to the British Company's payroll, which secured him an annual salary.[142]

After caboceer, the next most frequently used term in European documents describing African authorities on the coast was "pynin" (*panyin*), which can be roughly translated as "elder."[143] The term *panyin* refers to senior members of society, or simply grandparents. It is a title primarily associated with age and generation, though no precise age limit exists. The authority of the oldest members of society, of course, is an ancient and salient feature of West African social life. During the eighteenth century, panyins as a group included all senior persons, some of whom may have held various political or military titles in addition to being panyins. Therefore, the same individuals might have appeared sometimes as caboceers and sometimes as panyins in European record books and descriptions.

British records consistently refer to the company's dealings with "the pynins and caboceers" as a way of indicating the principal men, usually of a coastal town. The frequent use of these two terms together confirms awareness among European observers of the importance of elders, alongside holders of political offices and wealthy merchants, in coastal social and political hierarchies.

The coalition incorporated elite individuals whose authority stemmed from more ancient West African practices of government by elders and religious authorities, as well as individuals whose authority stemmed more

directly from the opportunities presented by transatlantic trade—personal wealth, military capacity, and access to credit from transatlantic traders. One RAC employee of twenty-two years, who reputedly spoke the Fante language, observed, "the Fantees are governed by the principal people and by the laws of their country. . . . That these [principal] people are chosen by the elders of the Country."[144] The distinction between panyins and caboceers was not significant in the eighteenth century. Governor Dalzel referred to the panyins and influential townspeople (caboceers) of Anomabo collectively as "the Anomabo Gentry."[145]

Another principal category of political authorities was that of the "Company's Caboceers," or "Makelaars," as they were called in Dutch records. The English records define a company's caboceer as a person who "is to render the Chief of the Fort where he resides every assistance in his power in settling disputes between the Chief and the natives."[146] This definition is not exactly correct, however, because there were company's caboceers in towns where there was no fort. For instance, the account books list payments to a company's caboceer of Abura, which is located more than ten kilometers inland from the coast and never had a European outpost.[147] The Dutch makelaar was both a broker and holder of a prominent position within the town (especially Elmina). He acted as an intermediary between African traders from the interior and the Dutch traders based at or anchored at Elmina and was also an intermediary between the Dutch and the Elmina town officials. Feinberg lists six makelaars who worked with the Dutch at Elmina during the eighteenth century.[148]

One of the benefits of being a company's caboceer was access to the European forts during violent uprisings on the coast. Shelter in the forts for the townspeople, especially women and children, was one of the points of leverage Europeans had in negotiating with caboceers. This is described in a letter written by Governor Mill (Cape Coast), who noted that failure to provide protection to Fantes during an Asante invasion in 1776 might put the company's forts in danger, since the Fante would likely retaliate against them if they emerged from the conflict as victors. Mill also speculated that the Asante might look favorably on the British company if they observed it providing protection for African allies and that this would work to the company's advantage if the Asante forces won the war.[149]

The family members of merchants were frequently employed in the castles and were often made company's caboceers. For instance, the son of an influential Anomabo merchant named Yellow Joe received regular payments from the British company in the 1790s—apparently for no other reason than his being Yellow Joe's son.[150]

Two other titles—king and braffo—appear less frequently than caboceer, panyin, and company's caboceer in European accounts but merit consideration here because they can be misconstrued as indicating the existence of a

form of kingship or centralized political power in coastal Ghana during the eighteenth century. Contemporary observers of the Coastal Coalition and modern-day historians alike have struggled to understand the meaning of the term *braffo*, which was sometimes used to refer to the highest-ranking person in the Borbor Fante state in the seventeenth century and in the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century. Fante oral traditions state that the first braffo became leader following the deaths of Oburumankuma, Odapagyan, and Osun, when the man chosen to be the new Fante leader refused to have his left hand cut off as a sign of fidelity to the people and his cane bearer who volunteered his own hand became the first braffo himself.[151]

Willem Bosman, an agent of the Dutch West Indies Company who lived on the Gold Coast for more than a decade up to 1702, describes the braffo as preeminent, but in title only:

> Here [in Fantyn] is no King, the Government being in the Hands of a prominent Chief, whom they call their *Braffo*, which, if one wants to translate into European style, means so much as Stadholder; but the word itself means Leader or Protagonist *(the one who goes first and fights first)*. He is the first man in the whole *Country* and has the greatest *Authority* but is somewhat closely restrained by the old Men, who are a sort of National Councellors, not unlike the *English Parliament* acting perfectly according to their Inclinations, without consulting the Braffo, regarding him as so much garbage; besides these decrepit little old men every part of Fantyn hath also its particular Chief, who will sometimes scarce own himself Subject to the Braffo, who hath the ineffectual Name only of Supreme Power.[152]

Bosman's remarks—if they can be assumed to contain a kernel of truth—suggest that even in the Borbor Fante polity the braffo was not a king but something more akin to a principal caboceer.

Jean Barbot, who was on the Ghana coast in the 1680s and also read the accounts of other Europeans who had visited the Gold Coast, refers to braffos as individuals who performed many roles in coastal society and noted them across the region, not just in the Borbor Fante polity.[153] Kea offers an interpretation based on seventeenth-century documents related to the larger area of central and southern Ghana, defining a braffo as "a high-ranking military officer who commanded the vanguard and who was responsible for quelling unrest and revolts in the state."[154] Braffo was sometimes used in place of caboceer, as in the treaty signed between the British Company of Merchants and the "Braffoe, Curranteers, Priests, and People of Fantee" in 1753.[155] There may also be a connection between the title *brafo* and the term *bura*, since the plural of bura would be *aburafuo*. Bura is used in the title of the Oracle of Mankessim—Bura Bura Weigan—and in reference to some individuals who probably would have otherwise been known as caboceers.[156]

In the 1790s the term *braffo* was used to refer to a number of residents of the central coast who were involved in negotiations among British agents and African elites:

> During that short interval, nothing material has happened, further than a deputation from me to the Braffoes, concerning the Annamaboe Palaver [dispute], whom I have apprized of our conciliatory offers to those people. I have already received one messenger from the Braffoes informing me that so soon as they have made the Annual Harvest Custom, they will go in a body to Amooney & the Fantees and insist on their accepting the [illegible] Friendship which we have offered them of suffering them to return and burying in oblivion all that has passed, Captain Aggery assures me, that he firmly believes these people, the Braffoes, will be able to effect a reconciliation. Most ardently so, I wish it may so happen.[157]

Here, the term *braffo* refers to a group of influential men, probably local authorities in Abura and Mankessim, among other towns in the coalition, who were able to influence the principal caboceer of Anomabo because of their status within the Coastal Coalition. As these various usages of the term demonstrate, the precise meaning of that title remains uncertain. Its political and military meanings clearly varied in different parts of southern Ghana and changed over time.[158] It certainly should not be taken to indicate the existence of centralized political authority in eighteenth-century Fanteland.

European observers used the term *king* somewhat loosely in their descriptions of political leaders in the eighteenth-century Gold Coast. For example, the Cape Coast daybooks record regular payments to a man listed as "Ahenebra, King of Fetu" during the 1760s, even though the Kingdom of Fetu, as such, had ceased to exist since the early 1720s.[159] In similar fashion, the members of the committee indiscriminately referred to "the Kings of Ashantee and Fantee," in their correspondence with the home office in London during the 1770s.[160] While the king of Asante was a well-known and powerful individual, the Fante Country (as it was known to the British) was clearly under coalition rule in that period. The most frequent use of the term *king* in European documentation of the latter half of the eighteenth century—including this example—appears to be in reference to Amonu Kuma, the principal political figure in the town of Anomabo. For example, various employees of the British Company who were asked to provide information to the Board of Trade in a 1791–92 inquiry associated Amonu Kuma with the title of king.[161] This usage of the term can partly be attributed to the fact that Amonu Kuma referred to himself as king and fancied himself to be on equal footing with any king, promoting this image of himself whenever possible in his dealings with Europeans on the coast.[162] This image was reinforced by the fact that Amonu Kuma personally informed the British

company about commercial treaties and political alliances made between Fante and Asante during his reign at Anomabo.[163] It was also in the interest of the British Company employees working on the Gold Coast to refer to Amonu Kuma as a king when they needed to impress upon the investors in London the importance of sending special gifts for this man to facilitate trade. However, Amonu Kuma's frequent meetings with other caboceers and panyins in this period demonstrates that he was surely not the king of the Fante. Likewise, if there had been a king of Fanteland, he would not have allowed Amonu Kuma to use this title.

The precise meanings of titles such as caboceer, panyin, and braffo remain unclear, but that there was power in these positions is undeniable. Several African men on the central coast of Ghana were significant, if minor, players in the competitive Atlantic World of the eighteenth century. The Gold Coast African elite were of particular concern to the British in the 1770s, when Britain struggled to maintain its power in the North Atlantic in the midst of the American Revolution and war with France.[164] In 1778 the governor at Cape Coast Castle noted that the Fante were positioning themselves to make the most of the Anglo-French conflict:

> The Fantees who can scarce exist but by Trade, have had very little [trade] with the English for these two Years past, at which they are much incensed, without making a grain of allowance for our situation in Europe; they now see a prospect of a long war with France and hear also that other powers are combining against us; from these considerations added to the natural treachery of the Fantees in general, and the number of them in *Annamaboe Town* who espous'd the cause of the French [during the] last War, we have every reason to apprehend that should they [the French] make descent on this coast and bribe high, these people would favour any attempt that might be made on our Fort at that place.[165]

Richard Miles wrote to his superiors that, even in this climate of strain on British resources, the Company of Merchants needed to invest in particular and expensive presents for leading men on the Gold Coast, without whom the British were "far from being on a footing" with their Dutch competitors.[166]

Military Roles of Caboceers and Panyins

Since military defense against Asante was one of the main purposes—if not the main purpose—of the Coastal Coalition, it is also important to consider how military power was organized among caboceers who led the Coastal Coalition. The formation of the Coastal Coalition in the first half of the eighteenth century involved a transformation in military force from royal slave armies to commoner armies, or asafo, which were the main military institution

Figure 3.3. Palace of the omanhene of Anomabo, Nana Amonu XI, who claims direct descent from Amonu Kuma I. Photograph by author, 2000.

in southern Ghana during most of the eighteenth century. The commoner armies were an integral part of law and order within the Coastal Coalition, since the region, like much of Africa, had become a place where military power was the primary means of establishing political and social institutions.

It is clear from eighteenth-century accounts that many caboceers who had political titles also had jurisdiction over military units. An English report of the 1790s clearly states that the soldiers in Anomabo carried guns and were "subject to the controul of the cabbociers & pynins."[167] When eleven company soldiers deserted in 1793 from Anomabo Fort into "the bush," for example, the factor, Charles Squire, "sent immediately to the Caboceers of the Fishing Town, who have dispatched a party of men after them."[168] Caboceers who commanded asafo companies met together in the central towns of Mankessim and Abura to coordinate large-scale military operations. These meetings are recorded in the daybooks of the English and Dutch trading companies.

Actual military leadership on the battlefield or in other armed engagements during the eighteenth century was embodied by men known in the European records as military "captains." Captain is the most frequently mentioned military title in the eighteenth-century records and seems to have been used as a quite literal translation from European to West African military culture.[169] The title *sophoe* was also sometimes used, possibly to designate a military position.[170] Less often the title *general* was used.

Captain was a title that one earned and was inducted into, as indicated by the following record from the English account books:

> Notable "presents and dashees":
>
> July 1—"Gave Quoy on his being made a Captain & having been very serviceable to us . . . 6 gallons brandy."[171]

Captains mobilized asafo companies at will for minor, localized disputes. They obeyed the instructions of caboceers when larger military operations were orchestrated. In case of large-scale wars in the 1760s and 1770s, the asafo companies followed their captains and generals to the general Fante camp, from which battles would be waged.[172]

Aggery, the son of Cudjoe Caboceer, was clearly identified as having a military title, which enhanced his power locally and within the greater vicinity of Cape Coast: "As he is general of the different Companys of Soldiers belonging to the town, he has great power and command therein, and also in a number of towns in the neighbourhood, for many miles in circumference."[173] Aggery personally collected a tax on supplies of fresh water to ships trading off of Cape Coast, which one ship's captain complained was too high.[174] When Aggery died on February 23, 1793, the watering of ships off Cape Coast was delayed as the entire town participated in a lengthy funeral.[175] Even the British governor noted that "the public has suffered an irreparable loss by the death of Aggery the Company Linguist and Captain of Cape Coast Town."[176]

The overlapping of political and military titles in the Coastal Coalition can be seen most clearly in Cape Coast, where there are fairly detailed descriptions of individuals. Cudjo Caboceer had more than two companies of soldiers under his control. In 1760 two of Cudjo's companies were sent to Abrem to retrieve women and children who were under attack by Wassa and bring them to safety at Cape Coast Castle.[177]

The way military force was mobilized in the Coastal Coalition can be gleaned from European accounts of the numerous palavers that escalated to the point of violent conflict on the coast. Though they are a poor substitute for detailed accounts of military activity on the battlefield in the several wars between Asante and the Coastal Coalition, these instances offer details about the operation of the military force that give a sense of its overall structure and effectiveness. The records clearly show that the coalition military was a well-oiled machine capable of quickly blocking the flow of trade to English factories all along the coast between Komenda and Accra.

The military titles used by Fante leaders and the structure of military organization within coastal society have been addressed in numerous previous studies, most of which have been concerned with asafo companies in the twentieth century.[178] Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, administrators of British

outposts on the Ghana coast took a keen interest in the military organization of local people because the British sought to organize coastal soldiers under British officers to fight against Asante. Brodie Cruickshank, for example, took note of the organization of towns into divisions represented by asafo companies.[179] These ideas were reinforced but altered slightly by Reindorf and Sarbah, who introduced the term *asafo*.[180]

Too often, the structure of political authority in the eighteenth-century Gold Coast has been represented as anachronistically paralleling the political structure of much later periods. For instance, oral traditions collected by British colonial officials in the 1940s recount the understanding of the structure of traditional, or "chiefly," authority in Anomabo, laying out a clear hierarchy of titles and territorial boundaries:

> Anomabo State consists of Anomabu town (14 miles east of Cape Coast) and approximately 54 villages stretching inland, in some cases west of the Cape Coast-Kumasi road.
>
> The omanhene resides in Anomabu.
>
> Unlike the neighboring Fante states, all villages in Anomabu State serve the omanhene direct, with the exception of the three Egyaas [towns of Agya].
>
> The title of Divisional chief, however, was conferred on a number of persons by omanhene Amonu V: there are now held to be nine Divisional Chiefs in the State. These are referred to as the Enofo, Eno being the name of the first paramount chief of Anomabu. The [Panin?] Divisional Chief is called the Enohene. The other eight are the Tufuhene, Turafuhene, Dontenhene, Akyenpimhene, Nkusuomhene, and Ahiafie of Egyaa I, II, III."[181]

Accounts like these, while invaluable for understanding the colonial era in Ghana's history, cannot be assumed to represent an unchanging "precolonial" political system, given the dramatic changes that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Perhaps because contemporary sources do not provide clear descriptions of titles and organizational structure within the eighteenth-century Coastal Coalition, historians have been sometimes used descriptions of the structure of "traditional authority" as templates for describing much earlier periods.[182] This anachronistic use of colonial-era sources disguises the fact that military and political titles pertaining to coastal African elites became more or less synonymous during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but were not so in the eighteenth century.

Studies of coastal military institutions by modern scholars have highlighted some features that seem likely to have been extant, at least in nascent form, in the Coastal Coalition and others that are probably more recent developments. The development of localized military units of commoners over the course of the eighteenth century was a vital initial phase in the formation of the asafo companies of later times. The military structure described by nineteenth-century observers must have had some origins in

the eighteenth century. For instance, coalition leaders probably included individuals whose roles were comparable to those of the Tufuhen and Supi of more recent times, even if these titles were not used in the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth-century wars between Britain and Asante, the British tapped the existing military structure of the asafo companies in recruiting Fante soldiers from various towns. The Agyas, for instance, fought under captains appointed by the Anomabohene.[183] Further research is needed on the Anglo-Asante wars and the recruitment of Fante soldiers before any firm conclusions can be drawn about the antiquity of military titles from that period.

Beyond Political and Military Authority: Merchants and Priests

It is clear from contemporary account books, treaties, and descriptions of daily affairs that political and military power was not the only kind that mattered within the Coastal Coalition. Professional merchants were numerous on the coast, particularly at Anomabo, and some of these men were almost certainly among the cadres of caboceers.

The number of people involved in long-distance or transatlantic trade in the coastal towns of Ghana in the second half of the eighteenth century was large. Richard Brew complained in 1776 that half the people living in Anomabo were involved in merchant activity.[184] The number of individuals involved in trade is also indicated by the numerous persons who are recorded as owing debts to foreign traders. A letter from a British agent working on the Gold Coast in 1794 listed fourteen residents of Anomabo who owed him debts. They included Quashie (£3 and 8.5 oz. gold), Currantee [Kurentsi] (£11 and 11 oz. gold), Cobea (£5 and 1 oz.), Tom Anishee (£1 and 10 oz.), John Adoo (£2 and 4 oz.), Bannishee (£6), Yellow Joe (£1 and 5 oz.), Coffee [Dansi?] (£7).[185]

Some of the African merchants in Gold Coast towns were professional traders who had long careers in transatlantic trade. One example is the aforementioned man known as Yellow Joe, who was a main supplier of captives from inland markets for the Anomabo slave trade from the 1770s to the 1790s.[186] Most of the traders in Gold Coast towns, however, were primarily occupied in some other profession and only part-time participants in long-distance or transatlantic commerce.[187]

In an environment where money or its equivalent in gold, trade goods, or slaves could quickly be transformed into military power, political influence, and social status—as the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century was—merchants cannot be discounted as authority figures of great consequence. These men (and presumably some women) were unofficial power brokers in the coastal markets and their immediate hinterlands. They usually did not

hold political offices, but they regularly influenced the way political power was used in local affairs by "buying" the allegiance of others. A 1776 dispute between Brew and the Anomabo brokers demonstrated how merchants might act in concert with political authorities in matters involving disputes with foreign traders. The interests of merchants were protected by the mobilization of boycotts and militia activity, which required the sanction of political authorities. This particular dispute began when Brew tried to arrange a direct transaction with a slave merchant from Abura, telling him that they were both being cheated by Aggery, the "gold taker" who typically brokered exchanges between inland merchants and Europeans on the coast.[188] In retaliation for this affront, Brew wrote, Aggery organized

> the rest of the goldtakers which consist of allmost half the Inhabitants, who imediatly resolved on making a pallaver on me, and accordingly on the evening of the 20th ordered all the drums in the town to be beat round my house which they continued to do for upwards of 3 hours without intermission, and proclaimed to all the town that no person whatsoever should supply me with the smallest article of provision under penalty of being sold of [*sic*] the coast.[189]

The next day Brew was informed through the Anomabo Fort's linguist and a panyin named Old Peter Quashy that he must send some liquor for the people while they discussed how to resolve the dispute at a meeting planned at Amonu Kuma's house that evening. When Brew refused to send the amount requested, they left but returned the next day and surrounded Brew's house again. According to Brew's account, more than one thousand men surrounded his house and fired on it, killing a man inside.

The support offered by political authorities to merchant elites did have its limits. Another dispute involving the family lands of Yellow Joe, an Anomabo merchant, further illustrates this. In the 1790s the British Company attempted to create a defensive esplanade around Anomabo Fort. The area known as the Fishing Town, which lay immediately adjacent to fort, included the family burial grounds and lands of Yellow Joe, who firmly opposed the British project.[190] Yellow Joe's was the only house belonging to a man of considerable consequence that was affected by the esplanade.[191] In the dispute, Amonu Kuma consistently refused to get involved and communicated to the British that they should do what they want, leaving Yellow Joe to fight for the rights to his land, along with the "Fishermen" who were his "subjects."[192]

The spiritual leaders known in European records as priests and priestesses (sometimes as fetish priests or fetishers) wielded considerable power at the local and regional level within the Coastal Coalition, alongside the political and merchant elite. Priests, known in Akan as *akomfuo*, did not participate in the political and commercial strategies of the Coastal Coalition to the same extent as political and merchant elites. Defense against Asante

military invasions and regulation of the slave trade were matters that primarily concerned caboceers; the realm of the akomfuo was generally more local and did not encompass the entire Coastal Coalition.[193] These men and women attended to the ancestors and deities that watched over the people living within the coalition's territory, focusing on local matters such as the administration of justice within a particular community, healing, and religious ceremony. Nevertheless, a small number of elite priests were known to participate in critical meetings where coalition leaders declared war or peace or instituted boycotts on trade and were regular recipients of gifts and payments from the English trading companies.

To some extent, the role of the akomfuo in governance in the Coastal Coalition was a continuation of an ancient tradition of joint spiritual and political power in West African societies. Priests and priestesses (akomfuo) have always played key roles in the governance of societies in southern Ghana.[194] Priests sometimes supervised the taking of ritual oaths, which functioned like legal agreements between individuals in Gold Coast society. When oaths involved Europeans, the priest would make the European swear on the Bible in addition to following local oath-taking customs.[195] In the seventeenth century, akomfuo in southern Ghana had the right to collect a particular tax that was periodically levied on the populace.[196] Akomfuo also regulated the extraction of gold in the region, prohibiting the development of mines where they were considered detrimental to the stability of the community.[197] Some towns had as many as fifty or more akomfuo associated with local shrines.[198] Of course, it was the priest known as Okomfo Anokye who helped legitimize the rule of the first Asantehene, Osei Tutu, in 1701, following the latter's defeat of Denkyira.[199]

In the eighteenth century the akomfuo shared political power with the warlords, chiefs, and merchants who governed the Coastal Coalition. The accounts of Rømer suggest that the akomfuo may have played an active role in eliminating leaders opposed to the formation of the coalition government in the early eighteenth century. Rømer believed that the priests had ordered the execution of several political and military leaders in southern Ghana in the period just before his arrival. These were men who had, according to Rømer, exercised "the highest command over the entire nation" prior to their demise.[200] Their counsel was considered essential when either "public or domestic" problems arose.[201] This was particularly true of the akomfuo of important oracles, such as Nananom Mpow, as shown in chapter 4.

Payments to priests by Europeans in the second half of the eighteenth century can be interpreted as indicators of the priests' essential, if minor, roles in upholding the legitimacy of the Coastal Coalition as a governing body. It was the responsibility of the priests to appease the ancestors and gods who directed the outcome of all major events in the region—from weather patterns to victories on the battlefield and epidemics. Priests received payments

from all that benefited from their services, and these were used to pay for sacrificial animals, materials for making protective amulets, and—not least of all—the material support of the priests themselves. Just as political elite demanded monetary support from Europeans for procurement of military supplies and personnel and just as merchants requested advances of goods on credit from Europeans for their trading operations, the akomfuo also had a legitimate claim to support from Europeans to ensure the favor of the gods and ancestors. When coalition leaders and Asantes assembled to discuss the terms of peace following the 1765 wars, for example, the British company also paid the "High Preist [*sic*] of Fantee: 2 yards blue cloth, 2 gallons rum (total value £4)."[202]

Conclusion

To summarize, the constellation of power within the Coastal Coalition included numerous men (and probably some women) whose authority rested variously on political office, military prowess, sacred power, and personal wealth. The evidence also confirms that the categories of nobles, the titles used by them, and the individuals and families that held elite positions changed over time. Atlantic trade was regulated formally and informally by political officials, military and commercial elites, and other coastal residents who had authority by virtue of their professional skills (e.g., bomboys) or social status (e.g., panyins). This collection of leaders—who defy precise classification into a clear hierarchy or familiar structure—must be acknowledged as guiding the people of Fanteland through the era of the slave trade.

Ghana's coastland between the Pra River and Accra, and its immediate hinterland, stands out from the rest of West Africa in the eighteenth century because it neither succumbed to incorporation into a neighboring kingdom nor fragmented into warring bands. In the eighteenth century the Asante Kingdom expanded through wars of conquest to include all of the rest of modern-day Ghana, mirroring the political and military patterns of two other states in the tropical forest belt of West Africa: Oyo and Dahomey. Fanteland followed a different trajectory of political transformation. The decentralized form of government established by the new elite was flexible enough to adapt and change within the challenging historical context of Asante expansion and massive slave trading. As this chapter has shown, the elites who took charge of military and political affairs in the eighteenth century—together with influential merchants and akomfuo—developed their own unique response to regional and transatlantic developments by drawing on local traditions, skills acquired during the era of the gold trade, and innovative coalition-building strategies.

4

Making Fante Culture

> Much superstition is intermingled with the laws of the Fantee country, and they are particularly strict; their punishments are fines and slavery, which amount to nearly the same thing: for, if the guilty person cannot pay the fine, he is by law adjudged a slave.
>
> —Henry Meredith, *An Account of the Gold Coast*

The history of the coastal population of Ghana in the era of the slave trade cannot be explained solely by developments in trade and politics, although changes in these aspects of Gold Coast life certainly had a profound impact on people in the coastal area. The majority of people in Fanteland, the common folk, were not directly involved in the creation of the Coastal Coalition or the traffic in human captives, although they were affected by both. The experiences of not only the elites but also the common people from generation to generation created a sense of common culture and history among southern Ghana's communities during the era of the slave trade. To better understand those experiences, it is necessary to look beyond coalition building and trade to the social and cultural institutions in which coastal people participated and within which they expressed their notions of shared identity.

This chapter considers the development of Fante culture during the eighteenth century and highlights cultural institutions that reinforced the unifying influences of political and economic conditions in eighteenth-century Fanteland. The people of southern Ghana wove a new cultural fabric in the era of the Coastal Coalition, combining their distinct traditions and creating new ones. These cultural changes occurred in religious practice, kinship systems, and artistic traditions, among others. Taken as a whole, they reveal the development of a common cultural foundation among the coastal peoples that did not exist prior to the eighteenth century.[1]

The communities living on the coast of modern-day Ghana between the Pra River and Accra during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries were divided into distinct polities, each with its own linguistic features and under the political authority of a sovereign ruler ("king" in European parlance).

The Borbor Fante was one of these groups, occupying the lands around the modern-day towns of Mankessim, Anomabo, and Kromantse. The Borbor Fante polity was situated between the polities of Asebu to the west and Agona to the east. Because of their migration from the hinterland to the coast and their ongoing trade with Akan speakers in the forest interior, the Borbor Fante people probably spoke a language very similar to that of the Akan speakers in the forest prior to the eighteenth century. They were in the minority as Akan speakers at that time, when Guan and Etsi were more commonly spoken languages. Political power within the Borbor Fante polity was probably organized around a central figure, known as the braffo. And the Borbor Fante fought brutal wars against its neighbors, including Asebu, Fetu, Komenda, Agona, Eguafo, Abrem, Ahanta, and Accra—particularly in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the divisions between coastal polities largely dissolved, and African elites in the lands between the Pra River and Accra began to jointly respond to matters of long-distance trade and large-scale military engagements as the Coastal Coalition. As this political transformation unfolded—and Borbor Fante elites came to have greater influence in coastal government—the Akan language became more widely used across the area. A new language, Fante, which blended Akan, Guan, and Etsi dialects and also incorporated words and phrases from Portuguese, English, and Dutch, became commonly used across Fanteland.[2] As is always the case, the use of a common language reflected a broader process of acculturation and identity formation among the coastal groups.

Two institutions that were essential in the development of Fante culture in the eighteenth century were the religious shrine known as Nananom Mpow and the asafo militia companies. These two institutions played central roles in the lives of ordinary individuals, households, and communities. Both predated the Atlantic slave trade in their basic forms but took on major new features in response to the conditions associated with the expansion of Asante and the growth of the Atlantic slave trade. The Nananom Mpow shrine connected people by offering spiritual protection, while the asafo companies unified people by strengthening relationships between people unrelated by kinship. Coastal people who were members of asafo companies and protected by the shrine of Nananom Mpow were less vulnerable to the violence associated with the slave trade, while anyone living outside these protective institutions—such as refugees, foreigners, or those expelled from their communities for criminal action—became more vulnerable.

From the perspective of people living in eighteenth-century Fanteland, the importance of these two institutions stemmed from their protective functions. But the unifying forces of the asafo companies and the shrine of Nananom Mpow outlasted the slave trade and the Coastal Coalition—both of which were destroyed in 1807 by Asante invasion and the abolition of the

transatlantic slave trade. In retrospect, therefore, it is clear that they established a common ground on which later generations of coastal inhabitants could lay claim to a shared history and identity.

Religious Change in the Era of the Slave Trade

Southern Ghana had its own distinctively African religious traditions prior to the nineteenth century, within which monotheistic beliefs were all but unknown.[3] Spiritual belief and practice centered on deities associated with the physical environment and natural phenomena, and a belief that the spirits of ancestors played a role in the world of the living. Descriptions of religious practice by European observers prior to the nineteenth century oversimplified the complex array of religious practices and beliefs by referring to deities and sacred objects collectively as "fetishes."[4] In fact, each of the seventeenth-century polities along the central Gold Coast had its own gods and sacred sites, typically including a particular god associated with the settlement of people in that location. Some also had royal deities.[5]

Within the traditional religious beliefs and practices of southern Ghana, sacred groves were, and are, central features. Sacred groves are sections of the landscape preserved against farming and clearing the land of trees because they are believed to be the physical dwelling places of ancestral spirits.[6] The spirits that inhabit these densely wooded groves can offer protection to the local population or expose them to danger, as they wish. They are therefore important points of contact between the living and the dead, where the former endeavor to maintain alliances with the latter.

Sacred groves sometimes function as cemeteries, memorials, shrines, dwellings of particular gods, oracles, or hiding places. Some groves became sacred upon the burial of important persons. Others were discovered to be sacred when an event occurred that was interpreted as being attributable to an unknown spirit in that location. A priest (*okomfo*) was then appointed to find out about the spirit and whether there were any taboos associated with it that the community ought to observe.[7]

The sacred grove near Mankessim, known as Nananom Mpow, probably became a sacred site around the fourteenth century, when the Borbor Fante settlers arrived from the north.[8] Today, a few large boulders at the edge of the grove continue to serve as a place where sacrifices are made and libations poured (see figs. 4.1 and 4.2). According to oral tradition, the Borbor Fante paid homage to their ancestors, Oburumankuma, Odapagyan, and Osun, at the site of their graves in Nananom Mpow beginning in the earliest days of their settlement in the coastal lands of southern Ghana.[9] Nananom Mpow functioned primarily as a sacred burial place and marker of Borbor Fante settlement prior to the eighteenth century.

Figure 4.1. Approach to the site of Nananom Mpow. Photograph by author, 2001.

The description of the main shrine in the town of Cape Coast by Thomas Thompson, who lived on the Gold Coast in the 1750s, illustrates the ways in which coastal people sought help from shrines (sacred sites) in the eighteenth century. Problems brought to a shrine might involve natural, supernatural, domestic, or financial issues—as Thompson described for the Tabir shrine at Cape Coast:

> Every Sunday they make an Offering to Taberah. . . . In Special Cases, as of some great Distress by Sickness, or want of Rain, and Apprehension of Famine, they sacrifice a Sheep, or Goat; and when the Sea is tempestuous for several Days together, that they can catch no Fish, this they look upon as a Token of their Idol's Displeasure.[10]

As a shrine, Nananom Mpow operated mainly as a place for seeking help from the ancestors in this way. As one contemporary described Nananom Mpow, "if someone wishes to ask about something, he [the fetish] answers through the mouth of one of his priests or priestesses, just as the other fetishes do, and mostly in the same way as it is done in other places."[11]

In an unprecedented transformation of religious practice in the region, Nananom Mpow became the site of an oracle that was revered across southern Ghana by the second half of the eighteenth century.[12] The contemporary European accounts do not explicitly document this transformation of

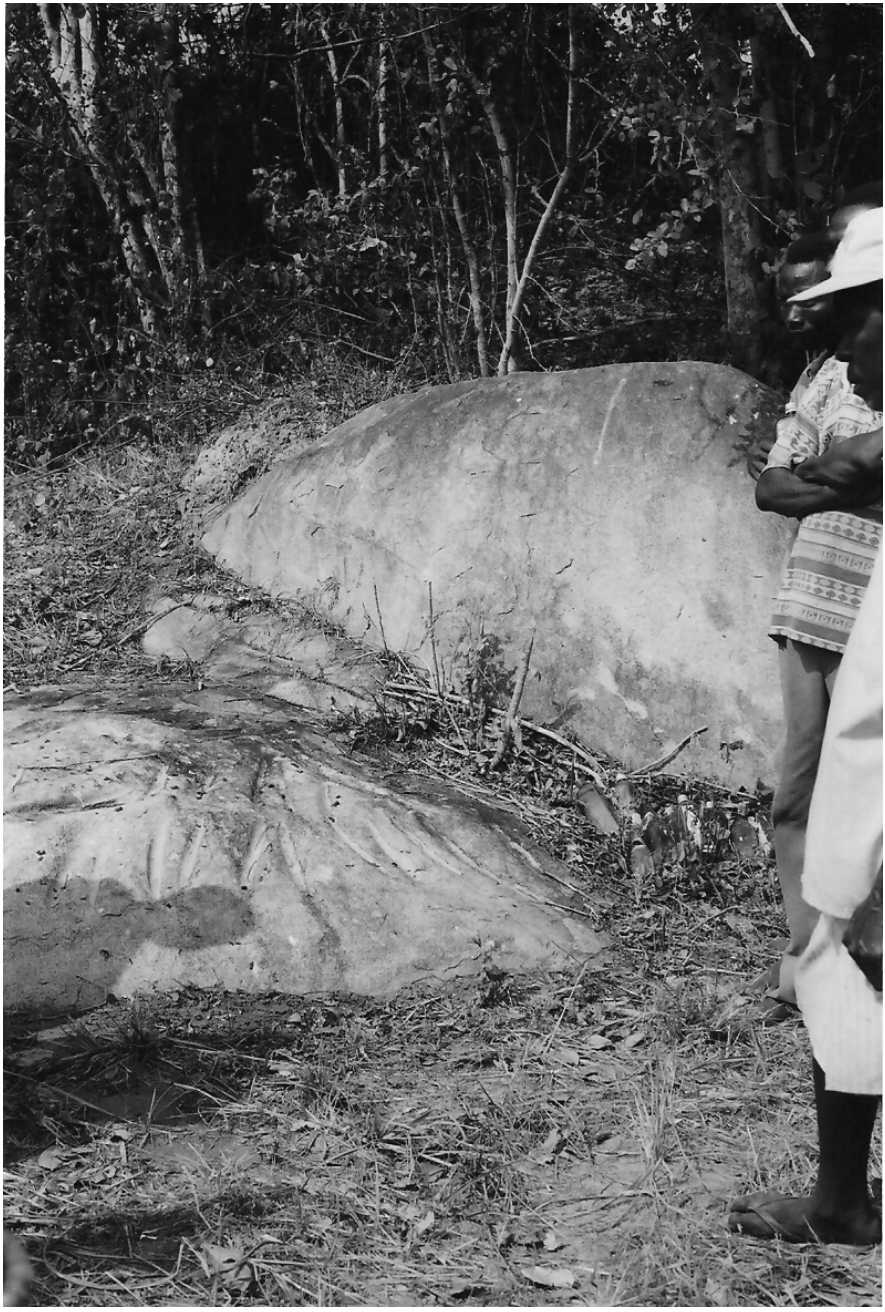


Figure 4.2. Rocks where libations are poured at the edge of the Nananom Mpow Grove. Photograph by author, 2001.

Nananom Mpow from a Borbor Fante ancestral shrine into an oracle or war god whose powers extended across the central coast, but a number of historical clues point to such an occurrence. First, whereas contemporary observers did not attribute any particular significance to Nananom Mpow vis-à-vis other shrines prior to the 1740s, after that point in time they regularly remarked on it as a powerful oracle or god of the Fante "nation."[13] The earliest documentation of Nananom Mpow taking on a new role as a deity of regional significance appears in the writings of Ludewig Rømer, who was on the coast between 1739 and 1749.[14] Rømer's description of religion on the Gold Coast sets Nananom Mpow apart from other sacred sites in the area. He describes a Fante "fetish" that was the most powerful one in the region. The location of this fetish, said Rømer, was "above Annamaboe, two miles from the shore," amid "several hills of considerable height and overgrown with thick brush and tall trees." This description clearly indicates a sacred grove, and because two Danish miles (*mils*) in the eighteenth century were equivalent to fifteen kilometers, Rømer's placement of the grove corresponds with the location of Nananom Mpow, which lies among the hills near Mankessim, inland from Anomabo.[15]

English records also document a religious center of unprecedented power in Fanteland around the mid-eighteenth century. In 1751 the British governor at Cape Coast Castle, Thomas Melvil, described an oracle of "the Fantee nation" that played a major role in the government of its people.[16] This is the first mention in English company records of a deity specifically associated with the Fante that also was considered to have a following among the broader "Fantee nation," which included territories to the east and west of the former Borbor Fante polity by the mid-eighteenth century.

Henry Meredith, who arrived on the Gold Coast in the 1790s, described the privileged position of Nananom Mpow among regional deities:

> The chief object of adoration is placed in the capital of Fantee, called Abrah, and is designated, Woorah! Woorah! Agah Nannah![17] Which signifies, master! Master! Father of all! Every town, village, and district have their favourite object of worship; as has likewise every family. . . . [Agah Nannah] being superior to all others in the country, and having a number of votaries, requires larger gifts and sacrifices.[18]

John Beecham's early nineteenth-century description of Nananom Mpow elaborates on the oracle's roles in the era of the slave trade and reiterates the sense that it was a shrine with a large following extending across Fanteland.[19] He counts it as an example of West African deities that were at that time "regarded as the tutelar [guardian] deities of the nation at large" and notes its apparent importance to the Fante people:

> In cases of great difficulty, the oracle at Abrah [Mankessim] is the *last resort* of the Fantees.[20] This has always been held in the highest estimation. Previous to the Ashantee war [1807–16], there was in the neighbourhood a deep and almost impervious dell, inhabited by a number of aged fetishmen, whom the people believed to be immortal, and to have lived there beyond all memory, in intimate converse with the fetish, and with the departed spirits of the aged and the wise.[21]

Oral traditions corroborate documentary evidence suggestive of Nananom Mpow's transformation from a local shrine into a regionally revered oracle in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Several oral informants have remarked that while other local gods were worshipped, Nananom Mpow "was the god of all the Fante people" or that "all the Fantes worshipped Nananom Mpow."[22] One response is worth quoting at length because it emphasizes the association of Nananom Mpow with the Borbor Fante and its importance to a broader population:

> I was told [Nananom Mpow] was found in a suburb of Mankessim. It was a great god or obosom for the Borbor Fante people. People from all walks of life went to it for consultations. Any person faced with a difficult problem went to Nananom Mpow for solution. It was the great oracle of the Borbor Fante people. Every state has his own gods or abosom, but *Nananom Mpow* was for the whole Fante people.[23]

Oral traditions are notoriously difficult to date, but this narrative must refer to the period between the 1730s and 1850s, as no descriptions before or after that period describe what could be called a "great god" in the area governed by the Coastal Coalition.[24]

The emergence of a powerful oracle with influential priests as its attendants should be seen as both the outcome of an increased need for a sense of protection among people living under extremely violent and unstable conditions and as a concerted effort by priests at Mankessim to participate in the new structure of power that formed in the region in the eighteenth century. The formation of the Coastal Coalition was mainly the result of a struggle for power among chiefs, warlords, and merchants—but also in the fray were religious authorities (akomfuo). Like so many aspects of Gold Coast history in the eighteenth century, the rise of Nananom Mpow to the status of a regional oracle shows the combination of desperation and agency that drove the innovations in Fanteland.

Nananom Mpow may have been involved in the political change that led to the formation of the Fante coalition in the 1740s. As mentioned earlier, Rømer describes a series of ritual killings that occurred prior to 1740 at the request of akomfuo associated with Nananom Mpow. He states that in the

course of three years, five braffoes or generals were beheaded at the request of the "fetish." Rømer believed that these killings had created a situation whereby the prominent family that had once produced braffoes had, by the 1740s, been reduced to one in which there were no grown men, only boys, available for the position. This suggests the participation of akomfuo in the reorganization of political power in Fanteland during the first half of the eighteenth century.[25]

The priests of Nananom Mpow became powerful participants in Coastal Coalition affairs in the second half of the eighteenth century. There may have been fifty or more priests and priestesses attached to Nananom Mpow.[26] These men and women were in direct correspondence with the agents of the British company and received regular payments from them. The record books of the company sometimes grouped payments to "the Braffo, Curranteers & Priests of Fantyn" as one entry, as such a payment would go directly to Mankessim. Other payments were made directly to the priests.[27]

Meredith describes the sometimes political nature of Fante priests' activities and their involvement in government affairs:

> The *fetish* men, or the ministers of their deity, are in general much respected, and have considerable power in some places. They industriously scatter abroad the seeds of superstition, and diligently disseminate their knowledge, to the end that they may be regarded with admiration, and referred to for counsel on every occasion of public or domestic calamity.[28]

Beecham noted that when consulting a priest one-on-one, people took rum and gold dust to the priest's house. That these were key commodities in the slave trade suggests priests' involvement in trade as well as politics on the Gold Coast.[29] The political roles of priests associated with indigenous religious traditions continue in the present, as they are participants in traditional festivals.[30]

One of the most important roles of the priests was their leadership in legal affairs on the Gold Coast. The priests intervened in military conflicts in which the Coastal Coalition clashed with Asante. For example, in 1768 the priests of Nananom Mpow ordered the coastal caboceers to keep an Asante hostage at Anomabo, rather than return him to Kumase, against the wishes of the Anomabo caboceers.[31] Decisions like these could and did precipitate armed conflict between Asante and Fante and thus show the ability of akomfuo to influence major politico-military events and, by extension, Atlantic trade.

The akomfuo of Nananom Mpow also played a direct role in the Atlantic dimensions of Fante coalition politics and trade during the era of the slave trade. The Coastal Coalition had to carefully manage their southern "border" and its inhabitants—the European traders on the Atlantic seaboard—through palavers and blockades. The roles of Nananom Mpow in settling,

and sometimes creating, palavers with the British trading company, in particular, were a profitable part of its functions in the era of the slave trade.[32]

Some of the most intriguing contemporary documents that refer specifically to Nananom Mpow were penned by the British governor at Cape Coast Castle, Thomas Melvil, to his superiors in England. Melvil was the first president of the council of the newly formed Company of Merchants and arrived at Cape Coast at a time when British commercial interests were stifled by Fante blockades and fierce competition from Dutch and French slavers.[33] In July 1751 Melvil explained in a letter to the Committee of Merchants that he was trying to gain influence with local African leaders by sending messengers to "the priests of Bura Burum Weiga [Nananom Mpow], who is the God of that Country, utters oracles and governs that otherways licensious people with a more than despoticke sway."[34]

Another account that summarized the British perception of Nananom Mpow was a letter written in 1765, in which a British officer stated simply that Nananom Mpow must "be very often consulted" during conflicts between Fante and Asante. In this particular case, the Coastal Coalition was blocking all slave trafficking from Asante pending a resolution to a recent war in which coalition armies had seized several hundred Asantes and sold them into the Atlantic slave trade.[35] By enforcing these blockades, the priests of Nananom Mpow were able to extract money from the European companies, since the latter were frequently willing to pay dashees to akomfuo to try to end the blockades.

The priests and priestesses also took advantage of competition between European trading companies by offering their support, in exchange for payment, to one or both sides. For instance, Nananom Mpow mediated the attempts by the French Compagnie du Sénégal to break into the British sphere of influence on the Ghana coast in the 1750s and again in the 1780s. During the 1750s Melvil sought the assistance of Nananom Mpow in preventing a French takeover at the port of Anomabo. The Anomabo caboceers welcomed the French interest in their trade—and accepted generous gifts from the French company—but Melvil bribed the priests of Nananom Mpow to declare against it.[36] While awaiting a response to his bribe from Nananom Mpow, he wrote, "In ten days I am to have the response of the Oracle which if favourable they are to have 20 oz. goods slave price."[37]

When the French tried again in 1786 to set up a trading post in Anomabo, the Company of Merchants sought the assistance of Nananom Mpow a second time. The company's council sent messengers "to the Priests of Murram and Abrah, to summons the Body of the Fantees to comply with the agreements entered into with Mr. Melvil in behalf of the Company the 6th February 1753, and 14th March the same Year, by which they excluded the French from ever settling in their country." The company sent a "present" of twenty-five pounds to the priests for them "to consult their great Fetish

Burra Waiga" and "to keep upon friendly terms with the Priests (who have great influence in the country)."[38]

Given the power of Nananom Mpow to influence warfare in the region, it is not surprising that the account books of the British Company of Merchants list regular payments to people connected with the oracle. Chiefs, priests, and messengers of Mankessim were consistently paid both a sort of regular salary and occasional bonuses throughout the era of the slave trade. The account books of the British Company of Merchants show frequent visits to Cape Coast Castle by messengers from Mankessim, many of whom specifically represented the priests of Nananom Mpow.[39]

Much of the communication between the British company and Nananom Mpow, and much of the payments by the former to the latter, were aimed at facilitating the flow of enslaved persons from the Asante Kingdom to the coast. A typical entry from an account book dated March 3, 1766, provides an example of how priests ensured the ongoing financial support of the British company:

> Delivered in presents to the several Cabboceers & Priests of Murram & Abrah who have sent messengers to me concerning the peace they are considering of with the Ashantees, to induce them to hear my reasons for accelerating & concluding a work which will be of such great advantage to the general trade—24 gallons rum / £7.4.[40]

The value of this particular payment was about equal to the amount distributed to the Cape Coast townspeople in the same year in celebration of the installation of a new governor at Cape Coast. It is relatively small compared to a present sent to the "King and Caboceers of Ashantee" that year, which was valued at thirty-six pounds, but nevertheless a significant one-time payment. Of course, these payments did not guarantee the cooperation of Nananom Mpow with British interests. But their regularity shows without a doubt that the possibility of a favorable outcome made these precious expenditures risks that the British were more than willing to take.

Altogether, the functions of Nananom Mpow contributed in significant ways to the Fantes' ability to avert an Asante conquest and to manage Atlantic trade and politics. The commercial and military successes of the Coastal Coalition in the eighteenth century were proof to the Fante people that Nananom Mpow was a strong and capable shrine, worthy of their support. This perception of the shrine's power dramatically increased the number of its followers in the eighteenth century.

Changes in the roles of sacred places and deities over time were not uncommon in precolonial Africa. Recent scholarship has begun to show that the violence and uncertain economic and political conditions associated with the transatlantic slave trade profoundly affected belief systems and

religious practice in many West African societies.[41] Well before the invasion of colonizers from Europe challenged the effectiveness of African deities, African societies ravaged by slave raiders and prolonged war were discarding gods that failed to protect and embracing new or reformed ones that promised greater security. This phenomenon seems to have been particularly prevalent among decentralized societies in which no ritually empowered king was available to offer universal protection.

Two recent historical studies of Ghana have shown the transformative effect of the slave trade on African religion. Most recently, Jean Allman and John Parker's study of the Talensi god, Tongnaab, has shown that the development of transatlantic slave trading initiated a process whereby this deity gained followers across West Africa and, eventually, the globe. As the Asante Empire expanded into northern Ghana, the population of this relatively isolated site developed an urgent need for spiritual protection.[42] Sandra Greene's studies of cultural change among the Anlo-Ewe point to a similar dynamic in the coastal region of southeastern Ghana and southwestern Togo.[43] She highlights the important connection between warfare and spiritual power in the era of the slave trade: "By the eighteenth century . . . a deity's prowess in war was of far greater importance than its ability to produce rain."[44] The politically decentralized Anlo faced a dilemma similar to that of the Fante. Their lack of unity required them to be militarily aggressive lest they fall victim to the raiding of neighboring states. Their response was to obtain a new god, known as Nyigbla, which became an important national war god in 1769.

Religious changes occurring among decentralized societies in southwestern Senegal and Sierra Leone during the era of the slave trade also bear striking similarities to those in Ghana. Robert Baum has demonstrated that the Diola communities of Senegal responded to dramatic economic and epidemiological changes introduced by transatlantic trade by turning to spirit shrines. The shrines were believed to have the power to protect both slave raiders and those who feared being kidnapped. Some Diola shrines changed dramatically in both form and function during the era of the slave trade to meet new and heightened needs for protection.[45] Rosalind Shaw has argued that "in Temne-speaking communities, local spirits have undergone a radical transformation in ways that seem to crystallize historical processes associated with the Atlantic slave trade."[46] In particular, the Temne apparently came to associate many local spirits with violence and raiding and, by the nineteenth century, had banished most of them to the uninhabited areas outside of human settlements as a means of protection from danger.[47]

Seen in light of these other examples, it is clear that the increased importance of Nananom Mpow in eighteenth-century Fanteland must be understood as another example of religious change that occurred in West Africa in connection with the impact of the Atlantic slave trade. This religious change

was both shaped by, and active in shaping, the Atlantic World. Nananom Mpow was needed because of the violence caused by the slave trade, but it in turn shaped the slave trade in Ghana by affecting the timing of military activities, enslaving people through judicial processes, and strengthening the sense of unity among the coastal people.

A comparison with the supreme symbol of religious power in Asante, the Golden Stool (*sika dwa*), suggests some of the principal similarities and differences between Asante and Fante responses to the slave trade. The Golden Stool is said to be the abode of the soul of the Asante nation. According to tradition, it descended from the heavens to land on the lap of the first Asante king, Osei Tutu, to give divine sanction to his unification of the people around Kumase into a new kingdom. The Golden Stool is not, then, a product of the physical landscape of the Asante people. Nor does it represent a link between the Asante Kingdom and the generations that preceded it. Whereas Nananom Mpow evolved organically to serve the collective needs of the diverse populations in the coastal area, reflecting in its development the organic evolutionary process of the formation of the Coastal Coalition, the Golden Stool appeared together with a particular king and embodied the power of a particular royal family over Kumase and the surrounding area.

The Asante invasions into Fanteland in the early nineteenth century occasioned widespread acknowledgment among coastal people of the power of Nananom Mpow. The shrine's most famous act of military advising was its command in 1806 to avoid war with Asante. Prior to the Asante invasion, priests of Nananom Mpow had warned the Fante leaders to find a diplomatic solution and avoid war. Nineteenth-century accounts of the Asante invasion of the coast repeatedly describe how coastal people later lamented disregarding the oracle's judgment. As Thomas Bowdich notes, some attributed

> the successes of the Ashantees, and their own defeats and misfortunes, to the disregard of what the oracle enjoyned. . . . For, whilst it was obeyed, they say the country always prospered; and, indeed, from the instances which have been reported to me, the responses appear to have directed a just and prudent policy, highly conducive to the welfare of Fantee.[48]

Clearly, Nananom Mpow had the trust of the Fante people at the time of the invasion and immediately after it. Fantes viewed their collective misfortune as resulting from a failure to respect the oracle that served them all.

The expanded power of Nananom Mpow must be seen as both the successful accumulation of power by the priests who attended the shrine and the perceived failure of other shrines and deities by people who had been defeated by the Borbor Fante in war. Nananom Mpow's priests became important leading men within the Coastal Coalition, so the oracle often

instructed chiefs on matters of diplomacy and war. The oracle also became a court where people were tried and sometimes condemned to slavery. Historians have analyzed the significance of the increased power of Nananom Mpow in the eighteenth century in terms of its role in the creation of a new form of government in Fanteland.[49] Yet none of these authors has considered the significance of the fact that the oracle became a so-called national god at the precise historical moment when the Atlantic slave trade was a dominant feature of Gold Coast life. Scholars have been concerned to show Nananom Mpow and its attendants as aspects of Fante government—Adu Boahen went so far as to characterize Fante government in the eighteenth century as "theocratic"—or simply as a pre-Christian cultural feature that was quashed in the nineteenth century by missionaries and Christian converts, causing a crisis of identity for the Fante.[50] Both of these interpretations treat the Atlantic context as insignificant to the religious changes taking place in southern Ghana. They therefore disregard the fact that the power of the oracle and its attendant priests stemmed from the terror of the slave trade and the belief that Nananom Mpow could offer protection from that terror.

Asafo and Social Structure

Asafo companies were another important institution in which significant cultural change took place in coastal Ghana during the eighteenth century. Based in all the coastal towns of the eighteenth-century Gold Coast, these armed militia groups periodically mobilized en masse as the military force of the Coastal Coalition, fighting numerous wars to defend the coalition from Asante invasion. They also enforced blockades against particular transatlantic traders or neighboring African commercial rivals, providing the force behind the regional commercial and military strategies of coalition leaders. These functions were extremely important to the collective survival of the Coastal Coalition as a sovereign polity and to the maintenance of a commercial intermediary zone between Asante and the coast. Yet asafo companies also shaped the internal development of social life in Fanteland during the era of the slave trade. Participation in asafo companies enabled people in southern Ghana to form bonds with their immediate neighbors in spite of cultural differences that would otherwise have prohibited the kind of close cooperation needed to protect neighborhoods from the threats of raiders and kidnappers. Asafo companies became a secondary community—beyond the lineage—that provided kinlike relationships of mutual obligation and dependency.[51]

Like that of Nananom Mpow, the history of asafo companies has been treated as separate from the history of the slave trade, in spite of the obvious impact of the slave trade on the development of the institution. Art historians and anthropologists have contributed important analyses of asafo

material culture and descent patterns to the study of southern Ghana but most have not considered the historical context in which these cultural features emerged.[52] Doran Ross is the most recent offender, as he does not mention the slave trade in his otherwise fascinating analysis of the Fante "military shrines" or asafo company "posuban."[53]

The prominent place of asafo companies in Fante culture has been well documented for the colonial and postcolonial periods in Ghana's history. Unlike the shrine of Nananom Mpow, the asafo system has remained active in everyday life in southern Ghana. Brodie Cruickshank describes them in their 1830s–40s form:

> The towns are invariably divided into departments or wards, and those residing within these divisions are formed into companies, who have each their distinctive flags, drums, and other equipments. The honour of his flag is the first consideration, and his service to his company the most indispensable duty of the citizen.[54]

Cruickshank goes on to describe the composition of a company: it was made up of some head men, or advisors, a flag bearer, a drummer, and a general body of members. Writing a century later during the era of British colonial rule, J. C. de Graft Johnson, assistant secretary of Native Affairs in the British Gold Coast Colony, noted that asafo companies were, "found in almost every town or village in the Gold Coast in a more or less developed state."[55]

During the period of British colonial rule in Ghana (1874–1957), asafo companies were the main organizing tool of ordinary coastal residents intent on protecting their interests in the face of exploitative chiefs and colonial administrators. Researchers working at the Institute of African Studies at Legon have recently accumulated data to suggest that asafo companies posed a serious threat to chiefly rule in the colonial era.[56]

Today, asafo companies perform vital functions in the cultural life of Fante towns, staging boisterous parades on festival days and at funerals, performing songs and dances particular to individual Fante towns, and maintaining a variety of artistic traditions—including the construction of elaborate shrines and sewing of colorful flags—that are becoming important attractions in southern Ghana's growing tourism industry.[57]

As De Graft Johnson emphasized, asafo companies were most strongly associated with the coast towns, where Atlantic trade occurred on a daily basis: "nowhere has the organization been so fully developed or does it play so important a part in the social and political life of the people as among the Fantis of the coast towns."[58] Today, the farther one travels from the coast, the less prominent asafo companies seem to be in local festivals and ceremonies.[59] The coastal towns were the front lines of the slave trade, in a sense, because the slave ships were so nearby and could depart momentarily. This

insecurity is demonstrated by numerous examples of so-called free negroes being seized and delivered to ship captains.[60] Given the unique dangers of coastal life, then, it is not difficult to imagine why the asafo institution emerged among people living on or near the coast.

The role of asafo companies as a core institution throughout southern Ghana's communities indisputably began during the era of the slave trade.[61] Although primary sources from the eighteenth century are far less revealing about the social functions of asafo than they are about asafo military activities, sufficient evidence nevertheless exists to prove the eighteenth-century origins of asafo as a social institution. The cultural symbols associated with asafo in the twentieth century—specifically flags, musical traditions, and coastal Fante identity—became part of the cultural fabric of Fanteland in the same context of heightened violence and insecurity associated with the Atlantic slave trade that also stimulated the evolution of the Coastal Coalition and Nananom Mpow.

Oral traditions associate the origins of asafo companies with a time when the coastal people were fighting wars against Asante.[62] This memory of long-ago war with Asante certainly references the more recent wars between Asante and British forces of the nineteenth century, when British forces primarily consisted of Fante people organized into long-established asafo companies.[63] But the memory of asafo originating at a time of wars with Asante may very well also refer to the now-forgotten wars that took place between various southern states during the eighteenth century. De Graft Johnson was commissioned to undertake a study of the asafo and its history and wrote a report dated 1932. He contended that "the *Asafu* organization arose out of a national crisis when it became necessary for all able-bodied males in the community to combine and organize themselves into a fighting body (*Asafu*) with a view to protecting their women, the young, and the infirm against outside aggression."[64] In 1932 oral informants would have known about the Asante wars of the nineteenth century and could have referenced them specifically. The fact that De Graft Johnson's report refers, instead, to a general past, when "national crisis" created a need for total mobilization of adult males to protect against an unspecified "outside aggression" suggests that the collective memory of Fantes in the early twentieth century associated asafo companies with an earlier era, likely that of the Atlantic slave trade.

The more substantial evidence of asafo origins in the era of the slave trade are in the continuing traditions of what asafo companies do. When asked about the purpose of the companies, oral informants past and present make reference to issues of security. Typical asafo duties include clearing the paths and roads and forming search parties to recover missing people.[65] The references to road clearing and pursuit of criminals are particularly resonant with the conditions of the era of the slave trade. This is suggested in De Graft Johnson's report:

> Every year the Asafu perform the custom of Akwambo (ceremonial road-clearing). This used to be a regular annual duty, when the various roads leading to the principal town from the villages were cleared by the members of the Asafu. In course of time, road-clearing was undertaken at odd times and latterly dropped as an Asafu duty; but it is still the case in Anumabu, Abura, Apam and other places, certain roads, particularly those leading to the shrines of the titular deities, are cleared ceremonially as part of the Ahubaa Kuma or Akumasi or Bontugu customs.[66]

During the era of the slave trade, of course, roads were the most dangerous place for people in terms of the risk of kidnapping or banditry. Keeping them cleared and maintaining an armed presence with asafo members was essential to the maintenance of law and order in the Coastal Coalition.

De Graft Johnson's understanding of the nature of asafo "police work" also reflected something of the dangers particular to the slave trade. "Asafu in normal times may be called upon without any previous notice to enter the forest or wood in order to capture a murderer or a highway robber, or to search for a would-be suicide, or to hunt and kill any wild ravaging animal which has become a menace to the community."[67] This resonates with accounts of people being in danger or disappearing in the bush that are common throughout West Africa where the slave trade took many victims.[68]

Probably the most typical work of asafo companies in the eighteenth century was to function as a sort of neighborhood watch for their village or district of a town. Raiders and kidnappers could attack a settlement at any time, and it was the task of the asafo to organize quickly to respond to these local threats. Oral traditions and the memories of Fantes today reflect a sense of this danger. Warnings about the danger of wandering in the bush alone and being caught and sold were still being repeated in the early 1900s.[69]

This role as a sort of local police force had an additional level of significance for port towns because the commercial success of transatlantic trade depended on a relatively peaceful state of affairs in these towns. Slavers from Europe and the Americas revisited coastal African markets that were known to be consistently safe places for trade and avoided ports that were known to be plagued by theft and deceitful commercial practices. The contemporary description by the English missionary Thomas Thompson suggests that in the larger towns on the Gold Coast, where the powerful politico-military authorities maintained political control, little violence occurred. In the sparsely populated countryside, by contrast, people were far more susceptible to raiding.[70] An active and ready asafo company thus became essential for rural communities in the eighteenth century. The asafo institution thus developed into a regional military network that protected both urban and rural people against local threats and foreign invasions.

Changing Kinship Patterns in the Era of the Slave Trade

Asafo companies played an important role in the unification of the coastal population during the era of the slave trade because they provided a kinlike set of relationships among people living in close proximity to one another in coastal towns and villages. Asafo companies were (and are) composed of men and women living within a particular section of a town or together in one village. Larger towns such as Anomabo, Cape Coast, and Elmina have several companies, each of which is historically tied to a particular ward or district of the town.[71] The residential nature of membership in asafo companies was an essential part of their protective function. Incorporation into asafo companies served as an additional layer of social cohesion beyond, and distinct from, membership in a lineage. Lineages necessarily dispersed geographically from generation to generation as members married and left their natal homes to reside with spouses. Members of asafo companies, by contrast, lived near each other by definition.[72] A sense of mutual obligation and dependency was reinforced by adherence to a local asafo shrine, which harnessed the power of deceased ancestors who were members of the company.[73] In the era of the slave trade, when inhabitants of coastal towns were particularly vulnerable to kidnapping and raids because of their proximity to passing slave ships, cooperation with one's closest neighbors was essential. The disappearance of a family member might be remedied through a palaver, providing that an eyewitness to the kidnapping was willing to enter into a dispute on behalf of a neighbor.

The emergence of a social institution with kinshiplike features, based on residency rather than lineage, was an adaptation not only to the pervasive violence on the coast but also to two other important conditions brought on by the Atlantic slave trade. First, the growth of transatlantic trade contributed to a weakening of kinship bonds by enhancing the size of the merchant class and the wage-earning working class. In the bustling coastal towns of the eighteenth-century Gold Coast, young men and women had opportunities to accumulate wealth that were not predicated on assistance from lineage members. Traders, porters, canoemen, carpenters, translators, market sellers, and numerous others who in earlier generations would have depended on the inheritance of farmland to support their families could make a good living earning wages or trade goods in coastal cities.[74]

Second, while new opportunities weakened some kinship ties, urbanization and migration created an unprecedented need for new ones in the era of the slave trade. In the eighteenth century, Atlantic Africa saw substantial migration. The wars and banditry associated with the slave trade created refugees across the continent, and indeed throughout the Atlantic World. In southern Ghana the coastal towns attracted people in search of new residences and livelihoods. Another set of migrants were enslaved people who

Figure 4.3. Asafo shrine, Anomabo (No. 2 Company). Photograph by author, 2001.

Figure 4.4. Asafo shrine, Anomabo (No. 4 Company). Photograph by author, 2001.

Figure 4.5. Asafo shrine, Anomabo (No. 6 Company). Photograph by author, 2001.

came to southern Ghana as the property of a wealthy merchant or political authority. Like everywhere in Africa, the transatlantic slave trade coincided with the expansion of slave holding in southern Ghana.[75] Whether slave or free, these "strangers" and their descendants had to somehow be incorporated into communities in southern Ghana.

John Mensah Sarbah drew attention to the importance of these changes at the end of the nineteenth century:

> When the iniquitous and accursed slave trade stirred up the cupidity and all the degrading passions of men, it became highly expedient for every person to be under the protection of a powerful neighbour; it became absolutely necessary for every individual *to belong to a household.* At this period, *clan feeling and clan hospitality becoming weakened began to decay.*"

By mentioning households, Sarbah suggested that coping mechanisms used by people living in southern Ghana during the slave trade found ways to respond to insecurity that were rooted in the local community. Individuals needed kin or a household, or the equivalent, to escape being "ruthlessly captured and sold into foreign slavery."[76]

As an alternative kin group for people detached from their lineages, due to either migration to towns or enslavement, asafo companies performed the critical function of integrating people into communities where they

lacked biological kin. In the same way, they also played an important role in the integration of Akan and non-Akan populations in southern Ghana. The inhabitants of southern Ghana during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries were divided into at least three linguistic groups (Guan, Akan, and Etsi). Moreover, some were patrilineal societies (Guan, Etsi) and others were matrilineal (Akan). They identified themselves with the kingdoms that ruled by sacred kingship—Eguafo, Fetu, Asebu, Borbor Fante, Acron, and Agona. These groups fought wars against each other and against inland states throughout the seventeenth century and the first few decades of the eighteenth century, which then witnessed the integration of these groups into an increasingly homogenous whole. They merged partly through a political process (the emergence of the Coastal Coalition), partly through shared economic pressures and opportunities (the intermediary trade), but also through their incorporation into asafo companies.

The integrative role of asafo companies in the eighteenth century helps to explain the apparent "double descent" system of inheritance in Ghana as a historical development during the era of the slave trade.[77] Kwame Arhin highlights the "remarkable" contrast between the matrilineal kinship pattern of Akans and the agnatic descent pattern of asafo companies. This dual descent pattern makes sense in light of its historical context, in which asafo companies enabled strangers to be adopted into communities and protected against the dangers of outsider status.[78]

For coastal people with a tradition of matrilineal descent—including the Borbor Fante—asafo companies reinforced mutual obligations and dependency among agnatic kin, ties that had been weaker, historically, than those among maternal kin. The new inheritance pattern established throughout most of southern Ghana with the development of asafo companies was such that when a man died, any weapons, protective charms, or other asafo-related paraphernalia he might have possessed were inherited by his children, while his other properties would be inherited by his maternal kin. Furthermore, succession to certain offices within asafo companies was often restricted to a particular paternal line. Many of the higher-ranking positions within an asafo company, including the position of captain, were thus passed on to members of a single patrilineal descent group. The wealth and privileges passed down through this patrilineal system, as well as the social obligations required by it, were minimal compared to those involved with a person's matrilineage. Nevertheless, they formed an essential part of a person's identity from the eighteenth century onward. As Pierluigi Valsecchi has recently suggested,

> For the purposes of a definition of community membership, matrifiliation must be accompanied by additional information about patriliny. Indeed, in the Nzema, Ahanta and Fante areas, and more generally in the southern section of the Akan

> region, the paternal line constitutes the primary context for passing down social roles and duties to an individual. . . . The mother provides the "bones" and "flesh" while the father provides the "blood" and the mora (or sunsum).[79]

These agnatic elements in coastal society have been pointed to by some scholars as evidence of a strong European influence on the asafo institution.[80] But on closer examination, it is clear that this so-called patrilineal element in asafo organization can be explained by local traditions and patterns of social organization in southern Ghana.[81]

Fante Language

Another important aspect of cultural change in Fanteland during the era of the slave trade was the increasing use of the Fante language across the territory administered by the Coastal Coalition. Further linguistic research is needed to more precisely explain how and when the language known today as Fante began to be used along the coast, and when Fante became a distinct language from other Akan languages, including Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi.[82] Nevertheless, the documentary record does make clear that an early form of Fante was being spoken broadly across the region by the mid-eighteenth century. Thompson wrote at that time,

> The Fantee [language] is the most extensive in the practice of it, of any of the coast tongues, which is the sole dialect of the Cape Coast blacks, although independent as they are of the government of Fantyn, and is occasionally spoken, as far as betwixt Cape Apollonia to the River Volta, that is, about an [*sic*] hundred Leagues.[83]

In the 1790s Fante was commonly spoken among the soldiers and workers in the British forts and castles on the Gold Coast, many of whom were people of mixed African and European descent at that time.[84] By 1810 Henry Meredith observed that "the Fantee language" was "spoken and understood from Cape Three Points to Accra" and had displaced the "primitive language" of Winneba.[85] By the beginning of the twentieth century, Fante was widely spoken throughout the British Gold Coast Colony.[86]

Changes in language usage within African populations appear to have been a relatively common feature of the slave-trade era. To the east of Fanteland, in the Anlo area and elsewhere on the Slave Coast, people adopted languages due to the social and economic changes that accompanied the trade there, as Sandra Greene and Robin Law have shown.[87] Further research in this area will undoubtedly lead to a better understanding of linguistic changes associated with the Atlantic era in Africa and the African diaspora.

Conclusion

The culture of southern Ghana—known today as Fante culture—has a long and complex history that remains largely unexplored in relation to the effects of transatlantic slave trading. Nevertheless, certain features can be isolated as products of the eighteenth century and the historical context of the Atlantic slave trade. In the seventeenth century the Borbor Fante were culturally distinct from other coastal groups and separated from them by linguistic and political barriers. The language of the Borbor Fante at that time was probably very close to that of the Akan living in the forest hinterland. The Borbor Fante identified themselves primarily as the descendants of the three founding ancestors of the Borbor Fante state who settled at Mankessim, and most lived within a ten-mile radius of that town. The "others" against whom they defined themselves were the other coastal groups such as those who spoke Etsi and Guan, foreign slaves, and Europeans. The Akan-speaking traders were commercial partners and extended kin.

A concept of Fante identity—as distinct from the ancestral Borbor Fante identity—began to form during the long eighteenth century when the populations of the central coastal region of southern Ghana cooperated for their mutual defense against Asante invasion and European intervention in local politics. Cultural barriers between the coastal groups fell along with the political divisions that gave way to the Coastal Coalition. Having entered into the coalition, people from several distinct coastal language groups gradually adopted the Fante language, joined asafo companies, and became followers of the Fante oracle, Nananom Mpow. The Asante became the principal "other" against whom political sovereignty and cultural identity were defined, while a notion of solidarity among the coastal people, now the "Fante," became viable for the first time.

Conclusion

By 1807 southern Ghana was a very different place from the Gold Coast of 1700. The coastal population had achieved a degree of political and commercial unity that would have been unimaginable at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The coast towns were linked by a highly efficient network of communication that enabled them to orchestrate their responses to the constantly shifting circumstances of the Atlantic trade. Armed militia units were present in every coastal town, ready to execute the instructions of coalition leaders. People across the region spoke a common language and had a sense of their shared dependence on the shrine of Nananom Mpow. The number of captives sold on the coast was declining dramatically, falling to fewer than one thousand captives sold per year in the first decade of the nineteenth century, compared to more than ten thousand annually throughout much of the eighteenth century.[1] Agents of England's Company of Merchants Trading to Africa began to question their purpose on the coast in light of the British Abolition Act, which made the slave trade from Africa illegal. The era of the slave trade was abruptly drawing to an end, and a new era, in which Asante would become an even mightier military power in the hinterland, was dawning.[2]

The formation of the Coastal Coalition in the era of the slave trade stands out from other cases of political transformation in Atlantic Africa for its success in political unification without centralization of power under a king. The new elites who formed the coalition crafted strategies to effectively manipulate European agents of the English and Dutch trading companies in ways that exploited Ghana's unique fort-based trade system. The extent to which they successfully implemented those strategies was distinctive and remarkable in the history of Atlantic Africa. At the same time, the Coastal Coalition developed in other ways that reflected the experiences of coastal populations across Atlantic Africa, from Senegal to Angola. The violence associated with the slave trade necessitated changes in political organization among coastal societies all along the Atlantic seaboard of Africa and caused widespread militarization among them. Violence also encouraged the cultivation of war shrines, such as Nananom Mpow, throughout Atlantic Africa and created incentives for groups to renegotiate cultural identities and boundaries.

This study calls attention to the need for further research on the links between the era of the slave trade and the early colonial encounter in African history. The conditions imposed by the transatlantic slave trade contributed to the formation of some key institutions in the societies of

southern Ghana, some of which played important roles in Fante history in the nineteenth century. The so-called African intelligentsia of the nineteenth-century Gold Coast were mostly Fante speakers from coastal towns that had prospered during the slave trade. The Fante Confederation of 1868, which they created, and the early Anglo-Fante colonial relationship must be reexamined to explain both changes and continuities between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The impact of eighteenth-century political and cultural changes on nineteenth-century developments, including European imperialism in Africa, must be explored throughout the continent. The era of "legitimate commerce" has been examined in terms of the economic and political "crisis of adaptation" that befell African societies when the Atlantic slave trade declined.[3] But what about cultural changes? Which of the institutions formed by African communities under the conditions of the slave trade endured into the post-slave-trade period, and which were abandoned? Why?

To appreciate the entire scope of experiences and innovations of Africans in the era of the slave trade, it will be necessary to trace the creations of the slave-trade era into the next century. We know that when European imperialism infiltrated Africa in the 1880s and 1890s things would "fall apart," as Chinua Achebe's famous novel so intimately describes.[4] But certainly the way things fell apart in various African communities was shaped by the particular institutions present in those societies in the late nineteenth century. And surely some of those institutions were born of the slave-trade era. Too often Africa's precolonial past is treated as static and unchanging, especially in comparison with the colonial and postcolonial eras.[5] As scholars uncover more of the complexity of Africans' experiences in the era of the slave trade, this knowledge must be used to examine the evolution of African polities and cultural forms in the era that followed.

The transformation of southern Ghana in the eighteenth century reveals something of the complexity of Africans' experiences in the era of the Atlantic slave trade. The trade introduced a changing set of challenges and opportunities to people in Atlantic Africa over time, just as it did in Europe and the Americas. A small number of people in southern Ghana benefited enormously, becoming masters of trade and diplomacy, as well as slave masters. These men and women were the African counterparts to European investors and plantation owners in Europe and the Americas, for whom the slave trade was a boon. Yet most Africans were only indirectly affected by the human trafficking. The vast majority of African people living in the eighteenth century participated in social and cultural adaptations that responded to changing local circumstances created, indirectly, by the Atlantic slave trade. Except for those living very near the coast, Africans were largely unaware of the magnitude of the Atlantic slave trade. Even African merchants at the forefront of the trade on the coast

could not have imagined the cumulative effects it was having on African or American societies. Changes in the demographic composition of entire subcontinental regions, widespread stagnation in African manufacturing, and chronic political fragmentation were patterns that could be fully appreciated only in hindsight.

If Africa was, overall, victimized by the Atlantic slave trade, then the social changes that Africans made in the era of the slave trade can and should be seen as acts of fighting against violence and instability, even if the fight was more often aimed at survival than ending the trade. As historical scholarship on Africans in the diaspora has repeatedly shown, telling the story of Africans in the era of the Atlantic slave trade is a task fraught with challenges. Ethnic and cultural identities were uncertain and changing. Human agency, while pervasive and essential to the formation of new societies, was systematically choked by the slave system. Slaves sometimes became slave masters, returning to Africa in some cases to perpetuate the trade. In spite of the numerous challenges, however, telling this story remains an essential task. Any notion of the Atlantic World without it is sorely incomplete.

Notes

Introduction

1. Melvil to Committee, April 24, 1753, "A Narrative Relative to the Building the Fort at Annamaboe," in *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Committee of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, Relative to the Building the Fort at Annamaboe, April 1755*, in Adm. 1/3810, National Archives, London (hereafter PRO).

2. While the racist ideologies of this period were widespread among white Europeans and Americans, those who spent time on the West African coast and were familiar with African merchants and political elites recognized them as partners of equal, if not superior, knowledge and influence. See Robin Law, "'Here Is No Resisting the Country': The Realities of Power in Afro-European Relations on the West African 'Slave Coast,'" *Itinerario* 18, no. 2 (1994): 50–64; George Metcalf, "A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s," *Journal of African History* 28, no. 3 (1987): 377–94.

Melvil used the term "masters" in reference to the Anomabo people in another letter written in 1751: "The Fanteens are and ever will be our masters while the masters of [English] ships put it in their power to seize [English] boats. But were all English ships to lye [*sic*] and trade here [at Cape Coast Castle] where experience has shown they can do it to as good purpose as at Annamaboe when they are unanimous, and at the same time if a Man of War was to lye at Annamaboe to prevent the ships of other nations from trading there, we should soon see the Fanteens humbled but this will never be done except all the merchants at home [in England] give strict orders to their Capt's to lye in this road [at Cape Coast]. Therefore, Annamaboe must continue the Mart of Trade and our ships submit to the insolence & depradations [*sic*] of its inhabitants" (Thomas Melvil, Cape Coast Castle, July 23, 1751, T70/29, PRO).

3. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Emory University, National Endowment for the Humanities, and W. E. B. Du Bois Institute, 2010, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces.

4. Fante is one of the main ethnolinguistic groups of modern Ghana, accounting for roughly two million out of a total population of twenty-one million. Raymond G. Gordon Jr., "Ethnologue: Languages of the World," 15th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2010), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Ghana.

5. Compare, for instance, the extensive literature on coastal Benin, Nigeria, and Cameroon and their engagement with the transatlantic slave trade. Of particular note is Robin Law's work, including, "Slaves, Trade and Taxes: The Material Basis of Political Power in Precolonial West Africa," *Research in Economic Anthropology* 1 (1978): 37–52; Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons: The Interaction of Maritime and Inland Navigation on the Precolonial Slave Coast," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 29, no. 114 (1989): 209–37; Law, "Slave-Raiders and Middlemen, Monopolists and Free-Traders: The Supply of Slaves for the Atlantic Trade in Dahomey, c. 1715–1850,"

Journal of African History 30, no. 1 (1989): 45–68; Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550–1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Law, "No Resisting the Country"; Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving "Port," 1727–1892* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004); Robin Law and Kristin Mann, "West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The Case of the Slave Coast," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1999): 307–34.

6. Kwame Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600–1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); John W. Blake, *West Africa: Quest for God and Gold, 1454–1578* (Totowa, NJ: Curzon, 1977), John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469–1682* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979); Timothy F. Garrard, *Akan Weights and the Gold Trade* (London: Longman, 1980). Major museum exhibits include those in the Museum of African Gold in Cape Town, South Africa, and in the African Art Museum at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC.

7. Key works on precolonial Asante include W. Walton Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, 2 vols. (London: Murray, 1915); Robert S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (1923; repr., New York: Negro University Press, 1969); Joseph E. Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions, with Thoughts upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (1903; repr., London: Cass, 1970); John Kofi Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971); Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Edward Reynolds, "The Gold Coast and Asante, 1800–1874," in *History of West Africa*, ed. Jacob Festus Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (London: Longman, 1987), 215–49; Larry W. Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch, 1744–1873* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Tom C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

8. David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850–1928* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Road to Independence: Ghana and the Ivory Coast* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964); A. Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975); Dominic Kofi Agyeman, *Ideological Education and Nationalism in Ghana under Nkrumah and Busia* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1988); Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, *Nkrumah's Ideology* (Accra, Ghana: Assemblies of God Literature Center, 1991); Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities under Colonial Rule* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999); Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951–1960* (London: Currey, 2000).

9. See, for instance, a recent history of Ghana that scarcely acknowledges the occurrence of the slave trade there: Roger Gocking, *The History of Ghana* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005).

10. It should be noted that several important studies of the Atlantic slave trade include sections specifically about the Gold Coast, such as Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon, 2005); Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Gaston Martin,

Nantes au XVIIIe siècle: L'ère des négriers (1714–1774) (Paris: Karthala, 1993); and James Anquandah, Michel Doortmont, and Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, eds., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, Legacies, Expectations; Proceedings of the International Conference on Historic Slave Route Held at Accra, Ghana on 30 August–2 September 2004* (Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007).

Other works that focus on particular coastal towns involved in the slave trade, especially Accra, Cape Coast, and Elmina, include Harvey M. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminans and Dutchmen on the Gold Coast during the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1989); Per O. Hernæs, *Slaves, Danes and African Coast Society: The Danish Slave Trade from West Africa and Afro-Danish Relations on the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast* (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1995); Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); William St. Clair, *The Door of No Return: The History of Cape Coast Castle and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: BlueBridge, 2007); Yann Deffontaine, *Guerre et société au royaume de Fetu (Efutu): Des débuts du commerce Atlantique à la constitution de la Fédération Fanti (Ghana, Côte de l'Or, 1471–1720)* (Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan, 1993); and Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch.*

For a perspective from the field of archaeology, see Christopher DeCorse, *An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400–1900* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001); and Gérard Chouin, "Archaeological Perspectives on Sacred Groves in Ghana," in *African Sacred Groves: Ecological Dynamics and Social Change*, ed. Michael J. Sheridan and Celia Nyamweru (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 178–94.

11. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors.* See also Fynn, "The Political System of the Fante of Ghana during the Pre-Colonial Period," *Universitas* 9 (1987): 108–20. Fynn identifies the eighteenth century as the period of the slave trade (*Asante and Its Neighbors*, 13–16; "Political System," 120) but treats political change in southern Ghana as separate from slave-trading activities. As one of the few historians to focus primarily on precolonial Fante history, his neglect of the slave trade has had a profound influence on subsequent scholarship.

Another important work that emphasizes commercial and political developments on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Gold Coast without attributing causation to the Atlantic slave trade is Daaku, *Trade and Politics.* A continuation of the tendency to see the Gold Coast as a place of merchant activity without according importance to the fact that much of the trade was in captive human beings can be seen in James R. Sanders, "The Political Development of the Fante in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Study of a West African Merchant Society" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1980).

12. Ray A. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

13. Other less common spellings that appear in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records include the following: Anomaboe, Annomaboe, Annamboe, Annamabou, Annamaboo, Annamaboe, Anamabu, Anamabou, Anamaboe, Anamabo, Amaboue, Amabou, Anumabu, Hannamabou, Hanamabou, Anumabu, Anhamaboa, Animabo, and Mannemobu.

14. David Eltis, Paul E. Lovejoy, and David Richardson, "Slave-Trading Ports: Towards an Atlantic-Wide Perspective, 1676–1832," in *Ports of the Slave Trade (Bights of*

Benin and Biafra), ed. Robin Law and Silke Strickrodt (Stirling, Scotland: University of Stirling, 1999), 19–20.

15. This fort, which was known as Anomabo Fort in the eighteenth century but has sometimes been confused with an earlier fort built on the same site (Fort William), remains in very good condition but is rarely visited today because it is less well known than Cape Coast and Elmina Castles. See note 17.

16. Margaret Priestley, "A Note on Fort William, Anomabu," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society* 2 (1956): 46–48; Priestley, "Richard Brew: An Eighteenth-Century Trader at Anomabu," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society* 4, no. 1 (1959): 29–46; Priestley, *West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); David Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 149–52; James R. Sanders, "The Expansion of the Fante and the Emergence of Asante in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of African History* 20, no. 3 (1979): 349–64; Sanders, "Palm Oil Production on the Gold Coast in the Aftermath of the Slave Trade: A Case Study of the Fante," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 1 (1982): 49–63; Sanders, "Political Development"; Sanders, "Village Settlement among the Fante: A Study of the Anomabo Paramountcy," *Africa* 55, no. 2 (1985): 174–86. The work of Yann Deffontaine addresses the ties between Cape Coast and Anomabo in the eighteenth century. "Pouvoir monarchique et création étatique sur la Côte de l'Or au xviiie siècle: Brempong Kojo et la création de l'etat d'Oguaa (Cape Coast)," in *Akan Worlds*, ed. Pierluigi Valsecchi and Fabio Viti (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 187–214; Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*.

17. The first fort at Anomabo was built by the Dutch in the 1630s. The English constructed Fort Charles at Anomabo in 1674, but the fort was abandoned in the 1730s. The fort standing at Anomabo today was constructed in the 1750s (see chapter 2) and was known in the eighteenth century simply as Anomabo Fort but was renamed Fort William in the nineteenth century. Albert van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles of Ghana* (Accra, Ghana: Sedco, 1980). Margaret Priestley calls attention to Anomabo in her works, "Note on Fort William," "Richard Brew," and *West African Trade*. An indication of growing interest in Anomabo is its recent treatment in James Anquandah, "Researching the Historic Slave Trade in Ghana: An Overview," in *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, Legacies, Expectations*, ed. James Anquandah (Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 35.

18. This misconception was recently reiterated in Lisa A. Lindsay's valuable study, *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 71–72. See also Kwame Arhin, "The Nature of Akan Government," in Valsecchi and Viti, *Akan Worlds*, 71.

19. For an analysis of the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on southern Ghana's modern-day population, see Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance*; and Wilhelmina J. Donkoh, "Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana: Definitions, Understanding and Perceptions," in Anquandah, *Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 305–25.

20. Another prominent individual from Anomabo was John Sarbah (father of J. M. Sarbah). See, for example, Gazetteers (Oral Tradition), 1947, ADM 23/1/1235, Ghana National Archives–Cape Coast (hereafter GNA-CC).

21. Modern Ghana News, "Kufuor Celebrates Anomabo," *Daily Guide*, February 26, 2007, http://www.modernghana.com/news2/124584/1/kufuor-celebrates-anomabo.html.

22. Florence Abena Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns and Development," *Tarikh* 7, no. 2 (1982): 43. For the counterargument that the Cape Coast version of Fante is the more standard dialect of Fante, see Emmanuel N. Abaka, "On the Question of Standard Fante," *Journal of West African Languages* 27, no. 1 (1998/99): 95–115.

23. For further elaboration of the concept of Atlantic Africa, see John Kelly Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ch. 1; Thornton, "Teaching Africa in an Atlantic Perspective," *Radical History Review* 77 (Spring 2000): 123–34; and Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500–1800* (London: University College London Press, 1999).

24. A few examples include Sandra E. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400–1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Thornton, *Africa and Africans*; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Law, *Ouidah*; Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730–1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

25. Sylviane A. Diouf, introduction to *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003).

26. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*.

27. Examples include Edna G. Bay, *Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600–1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); McCaskie, *State and Society*; John Kelly Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641–1718* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Wilks, *Asante*.

28. Major works on precolonial Asante include Joseph K. Adjaye, *Diplomacy and Diplomats in Nineteenth Century Asante* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996); Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*; Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*; McCaskie, *State and Society*; Wilks, *Asante*; Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993); Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*.

Important recent studies that focus on other groups in Ghana include the works of Sandra Greene, Emmanuel Akyeampong, John Parker, Jean Allman, and Roger Gocking: Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); Akyeampong, *Drink, Power and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); Akyeampong, *Between the Sea and the Lagoon: An Eco-Social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana, c. 1850 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Parker, *Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000); Allman and Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); and Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*.

29. This idea has been articulated by John Parker in *Making the Town*, xxiv–xxvi.

30. If the captives ever left Asante, that is. Many were kept and used as domestic slaves within Asante. See Akosua Adoma Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15th to the 19th Centuries* (Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004), ch. 4. While there are certainly documented instances of traders from Asante bringing captives directly to the coast—particularly at Elmina and Accra—the vast majority of slaves purchased by Europeans on the Gold Coast were sold to them by coastal merchants.

31. See Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 86–90; Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 49.

32. Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, 40–41; Benedict G. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana* (Accra, Ghana: Woeli, 1998).

33. The expansion of Asante and its slave-trading activities are discussed in chapter 2.

34. Ray Kea's thorough study of Gold Coast history provides a fascinating analysis of political and military developments in the early eighteenth century; see *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, especially pages 154–68. The military rivalry between Asante and Fante is not addressed, however, as Kea's study seeks primarily to show similarities across the broader region of southern Ghana and southeastern Côte d'Ivoire. He writes, "Hence this study does not concern itself with the history of particular states or 'ethnic groups'; nor does it attempt a narrative treatment of trade and politics" (2).

35. Robert Martin Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13; David Northrup, *Trade without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 85–113; Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 197–237.

36. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 114–45.

37. Ibid., 68.

38. Concerning the social, political, and military adjustments in coastal areas in response to the emergence of widespread transatlantic slave trading on the coast, Kea's seminal study has again been invaluable in the development of my interpretation; see *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, especially pages 164–68, 285–87.

39. On the gold trade, see Daaku, *Trade and Politics*; and Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*. Studies focusing on the nineteenth century include Akyeampong, *Cultural Change*; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*; and Edward Reynolds, *Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast, 1807–1874* (London: Longman, 1974).

Two important exceptions, as noted earlier, are Margaret Priestley's 1969 book, *West African Trade and Coast Society*, which considered the eighteenth century in important ways but focused rather narrowly on one Gold Coast family, and the dissertation of James Sanders, "Political Development."

40. George Edgar Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807–1957* (Hampshire, England: Gregg Revivals, 1994), ch. 1.

41. The document was summarized in the 1865 Report of the Select Committee, House of Commons, "State of the British Establishments on the Western Coast of

Africa," as reproduced in John Joseph Crooks, *Records relating to the Gold Coast Settlements from 1750 to 1874* (London: Cass, 1973), 117–18 (emphasis added).

42. See the discussion of Akan state-formation narratives in this chapter.

43. The Gold Coast became part of Britain's first African colony (excluding South Africa) in 1874. On the Bond of 1844, see Robert Addo-Fening, "Colonial Government, Chiefs and 'Native' Jurisdiction in the Gold Coast Colony 1822–1928," *Universitas* 10 (1988): 133–51;

Joseph Boakye Danquah, "The Historical Significance of the Bond of 1844," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3 (1957): 3–29.

44. Francis Agbodeka, "The Fanti Confederacy, 1865–9," *Historical Society of Ghana* 7 (1965): 82–123.

45. See especially Gold Coast works such as Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*; McCaskie, *State and Society*; Sanders, "Political Development"; and Wilks, *Asante*.

46. Two foundational works in the field of Atlantic studies are Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Thornton, *Africa and Africans*. See also the discussion of the Atlantic approach in Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World: Blacks in the Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 3–4.

47. See, for instance, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon, 2000); James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585–1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Paul E. Lovejoy, ed., *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (New York: Continuum, 2000); Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Continuum, 2003); and Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007).

48. Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante."

49. Linguists do not agree on this subject, but see the following: Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns"; Akosua Anyidoho and Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, "Ghana: Indigenous Languages, English, and an Emerging National Identity," in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141–57; and Emmanuel Abaka, "Standard Fante."

The languages spoken by the people of Effutu, Asebu, and Etsi are unknown but have likely contributed to the features of the Fante language that makes it distinctive from other Akan languages. See James Boyd Christensen, *Double Descent among the Fanti* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1954), 8–9.

50. A few important examples are João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993);

James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformations of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); David H. Brown, *Santeria Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

51. The two main works on this subject are Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*; and Manning, *Slavery and African Life*. See also Stephanie Beswick and Jay Spaulding, eds., *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010); Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 51–83; Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, 62–68; Searing, *West African Slavery*, 27–58; and Larry W. Yarak, "West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slaveowners of Elmina" *Ethnohistory* 36, no. 1 (1989): 44–60.

Early works on the topic include Martin A. Klein, "The Study of Slavery in Africa," *Journal of African History* 19, no. 4 (1978): 599–609; and Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *Journal of African History* 7, no. 3 (1966): 431–43.

52. Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

53. These parallels can be seen in the works of Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil*; Sweet, *Recreating Africa*; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*; Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*; D. Brown, *Santeria Enthroned*; and others.

54. José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2004); Heywood and Thornton, *Foundation of the Americas*; Heywood, *Cultural Transformations*.

55. John Kofi Fynn, "The Pre-Borbor Fante States," *Sankofa* 1 (1975): 20–30; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*. The anthropologist James B. Christensen concludes that the Fante are an amalgamation of at least four peoples, including Effutu, Asebu, Etsi, and Borbor Fante. *Double Descent*, 9.

56. See further discussion of the origins of this name in chapter 1.

57. This is particularly true among the Effutu of Winneba. See Anthony Ephirim-Donkor, *The Making of an African King: Patrilineal and Matrilineal Struggle among the Effutu of Ghana* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 1, 13–14. Also see Christensen, *Double Descent*, 7–18; and Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 1–3. The ongoing use of languages and identities that predated Fante in the coastal region is also mentioned repeatedly in the oral traditions collected by John Kofi Fynn in the early 1970s: *Oral Traditions of Fante States*. 7 vols. (Legon: University of Ghana, Institute of African Studies, 1974–76). See also Fynn, "Pre-Borbor Fante States."

58. Linguistic literature classifies the Fante language as a dialect of the Akan (Twi) language, but as Florence Dolphyne has noted, Fante speakers themselves have long rejected the notion that Fante is the same as Twi. And, indeed, the Fante dialect contains many more distinct subdialects than are present in other Akan areas. See "Akan Language Patterns," 36, 41.

59. The eighteenth-century Fante polity, referred to here as the Coastal Coalition, is the subject of chapter 3.

60. Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 3.

61. Christensen, *Double Descent*, 19–35; George Panyin Hagan, "An Analytical Study of Fanti Kinship," *Research Review, Institute of African Studies, Legon* 5 (1968): 50–90.

62. Christensen, *Double Descent*, 77–96, 125–26.

63. This question was described as "overworked" thirty years ago but nevertheless remains necessary to assess the historiography of southern Ghana. See D. Kiyaga-Mulindwa, "The 'Akan' Problem," *Current Anthropology* 21, no. 4 (1980): 503–6.

64. I agree with the sentiments of Kiyaga-Mulindwa, who wrote three decades ago, "It is unfortunate that, over the years, the use of the term 'Akan' has obscured the complexity of the social and cultural composition of the region in the ages or periods that preceded the more recent processes of regional unification" (ibid., 506).

65. Linguistically, the term "Akan" is problematic as well. Linguists have sometimes referred to languages and language groups in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire as Akan, even though the people speaking the language live outside of the geographic areas associated with Akan ethnicity. The term is used to refer to the language group that includes Asante, Akuapem, and Fante dialects only because the term Twi was rejected by Fante speakers. Dolphyne also points out that the names of Akan dialects, such as Akuapem, Asante, Fante, Agona, Gomua, Brong, Wassa, Kwahu, and Akyem sometimes refer more to "political sub-groups" than to dialects in the linguistic sense of the term. Within the Akan language group, two so-called dialects—Brong and Fante—contain numerous subdialects that can be mutually unintelligible. The three main forms of the Akan language—Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, and Fante—each have a written form and a literary history. Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns," 35–36, 41–42; Emmanuel Abaka, "Standard Fante," 95. See also J. M. Stewart, "Akan History: Some Linguistic Evidence," *Ghana Notes and Queries* 9 (1966): 54–58; and Kiyaga-Mulindwa, "'Akan' Problem."

66. D. Kiyaga-Mulindwa outlined this problem from an anthropological perspective in 1980; see "'Akan' Problem."

67. Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*; John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws: A Brief Introduction to the Principles of the Native Laws and Customs of the Fanti and Akan Districts of the Gold Coast with a Report of Some Cases Thereon Decided in the Law Courts* (London: Cass, 1968). See also Ray Jenkins, "Intellectuals, Publication Outlets and 'Past Relationships': Some Observations on the Emergence of Early Gold Coast/Ghanaian Historiography in the Cape-Accra-Akropong Triangle: c. 1880–1917," in *Self-Assertion and Brokerage: Early Cultural Nationalism in West Africa*, ed. P. F. de Moraes Farias and Karin Barber (Birmingham: Center of West African Studies, Birmingham University, 1990); and Ray Jenkins, "North American Scholarship and the Thaw in the Historiography of Ghanaian Coastal Communities," *Ghana Studies Bulletin* 3 (1985): 19–28.

68. Danquah, "Historical Significance."

69. Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, 517–18; Priestley, *West African Trade*, ch. 4.

70. Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 1–16.

71. Alfred Burdon Ellis, *A History of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (1893; repr., New York: Negro University Press, 1964). The extent to which colonizers created or

"invented" Akan identity should not be overstated, because Africans had their own reasons for emphasizing their "Akanness." See, for example, the arguments in Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 14; and Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, 13–19.

72. An important exception is Priestley, *West African Trade*. Adu Boahen contradicted himself by arguing that all Akan (including Asante and Fante) had virtually identical political institutions, while noting that Asante was a "huge and relatively well-organized empire" and Fante was "comparatively small and rather loosely organized." "Asante and Fante A.D. 1000–1800," in *A Thousand Years of West African History*, ed. Jacob Festus Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1965), 160, 182.

73. While the growth of the Asante Kingdom played an important role in shaping the region's history in the eighteenth century, the age of Asante's dominance over all the lands of modern-day Ghana began only in the nineteenth century. The success of the Asante Kingdom was very much in doubt up to the 1750s, as many of its subject territories engaged in repeated revolts against the king. And the coastal stretch between Elmina and Accra—from whence the vast majority of the slaves leaving the coast departed—remained outside of Asante's control until the wars of 1807–16 completed the expansion of the kingdom. Even in the golden age of Asante dominance in the nineteenth century, moreover, it was the Fante who were negotiating the terms of increased British involvement in the government of the coast, setting the stage for the Fante to play important roles in the early phases of British colonial rule.

In the late nineteenth century, James Africanus Beale Horton, an early African nationalist from Sierra Leone, considered the language spoken in the interior of the Gold Coast, which he called "Tyi," to be a dialect of Fante, rather than the other way around. From his point of view in the 1860s, the Fante area was the most "civilized" part of the British Gold Coast protectorate, and he perceived the coast as the generative region for culture and language. *West African Countries and Peoples* (1868; repr., London: Edinburgh at the University Press, 1969), 101–2, 118–19. By the same token, it is quite possible to consider Denkyira to be a Fante state; see Ayandele in J. A. B. Horton, *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast since the Exchange of Territory between the English and Dutch Governments, on January 1, 1868, Together with a Short Account of the Ashantee War, 1862–4, and the Awoonah War, 1866* (1870; repr., London: Cass, 1970), 20.

74. J. M. Stewart explains that the Akan languages had no single, generally accepted name prior to the 1960s: "It used to be customary to refer always to one or other of the two main dialects, namely Asante and Fante, and never to refer to the language as a whole. Now, however, the unity is admitted and the Asantes, the Fantes and the Government of Ghana area all agreed that the language should be called Akan. Linguists must clearly accept this development." Stewart, "Akan History," as quoted in Paul Edward Hedley Hair, *Africa Encountered: European Contacts and Evidence, 1450–1700* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Variorum, 1997), 244–45n45. Defining the Akan language was thus part of the project of consciously creating nationhood in the nascent Republic of Ghana.

75. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 144.

76. Boahen, "Asante and Fante," 160.

77. A particularly troublesome example is the assertion that asafo companies—a distinctly coastal phenomenon and part of the amalgamation of cultural influences that formed Fante cultural identity—were "purely an Akan institution." B. O. Antwi,

"Asafo Poetry" (MA seminar paper presented to the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 1964), 1–2.

78. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 1.

79. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, 91.

80. DeCorse, *Archaeology of Elmina*, 19.

81. Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700–1943: From Ofori Panin to Sir Ofori Atta* (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1997); Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*; Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*; Greene, *Social Change*; Parker, *Making the Town*; Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante"; Sanders, "Political Development"; Mary McCarthy, *Social Change and the Growth of British Power in the Gold Coast: The Fante States, 1807–1874* (New York: University Press of America, 1983); Tom C. McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim: An Essay in Fante History," in *West African Economic and Social History: Studies in Memory of Marion Johnson*, ed. David Henige and T. C. McCaskie (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1990), 133–50; Tom C. McCaskie, "Denkyira in the Making of Asante c. 1660–1720," *Journal of African History* 48, no. 1 (2007): 1–25.

82. Fynn continues to characterize the Fante as more or less the same as other Akan: "The Fante, like all Akan, responded to the new political and economic demands arising out of the European contact." "Trade and Politics in Akanland," *Tarikh* 7, no. 2 (1982): 23–30. Ray Kea avoids the issue by leaving any discussion out of his main study of the region; see *Settlements, Trade and Polities*. Gocking suggests something of the notion of Akans as natural-born state builders: "like their fellow Akan, the Asante, the political system that the Fante evolved was also based on matrilineal succession to office, and this too became one of their important contributions to the coastal settlements where succession had perhaps been much more ill defined and haphazard." *Facing Two Ways*, 31.

83. Fynn, "Pre-Borbor Fante States," George Panyin Hagan, *"Divided We Stand": A Study of Social Change among the Effutu of Coastal Ghana*, Trondheim Studies in History, No. 29 (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of History, 2000).

84. See, for example, A. Norman Klein, "Toward a New Understanding of Akan Origins: Malaria and the Akan," *Africa* (London) 66, no. 2 (1996): 248–73, and contrast the perspective of Kiyaga-Mulindwa, Kiyaga-Mulindwa, "'Akan' Problem."

85. Carola Lentz and Paul Nugent, eds., *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

86. On Yoruba identity, see Toyin Falola, "The Yorùbá Nation" in *Yorùbá Identity and Power Politics*, ed. Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 29–48.

87. Lentz and Nugent, "Ethnicity in Ghana: A Comparative Perspective," in Lentz and Nugent, *Ethnicity in Ghana*, 7–8.

88. Henry Meredith, *An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa, with a Brief History of the African Company* (1812; repr., London: Cass, 1967), 23.

89. Torrane to Committee, July 20, 1807 (received October 9), T70/35, PRO, in Documents of the History of the Fante States: 1701–44, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, n.d., 89–97.

90. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*; Richard Cullen Rath, "African Music in Seventeenth Century Jamaica: Cultural Transit and Transition," *William and Mary Quarterly*

50, no. 4 (1993): 700–726; Lovejoy and Trotman, *Dimensions of Ethnicity*; Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Michael Craton and Garry Greenland, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Monica Schuler, "Myalism and the African Religious Tradition in Jamaica," in *Africa and the Caribbean: The Legacies of a Link*, ed. Margaret E. Crahan and Franklin W. Knight (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). See also David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 255–56. See also a related discussion of ethnic origins in Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "African Ethnicities and the Meanings of 'Mina,'" in Lovejoy and Trotman, *Dimensions of Ethnicity*, 65–81; and Robin Law, "Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans in the Diaspora: On the Meanings Of 'Mina' (Again)," *History in Africa* 32 (2005): 247–67.

91. John Thornton has pointed out that "Akan" has not historically functioned as an identifier of ethnicity among Akan speakers in the Americas. Captives from the Gold Coast were generally referred to as "Kromantse" or "Coromanti" slaves. *Africa and Africans*, 321–22. See also Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 115, 122.

92. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

Chapter 1

1. Long-distance trade between the lower Volta River region and the Western Sudan may have begun during the era of the Mali Empire, as early as circa 1000 CE, but gold-producing centers such as Beghu (Begho/Bighu) and Bono Manso urbanized mainly in the period from 1350 to 1650 CE. James Anquandah, "Urbanization and State Formation in Ghana during the Iron Age," in *Archaeology of Africa: Foods, Metals, and Towns*, ed. Thurstan Shaw (New York: Routledge, 1993), 642–51.

2. Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, ch. 4; Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, ch. 1.

3. Evidence of iron smelting in what is now Ghana dates from the second century CE. Graham Connah, *African Civilizations: An Archaeological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 153–55.

4. Ibid., ch. 5.

5. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, ch. 1. For an alternative interpretation, see A. N. Klein, "Akan Origins."

6. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, 8–22. Additional spellings include "Beghu" and "Begho."

7. Edmund Abaka, "'Eating Kola': The Pharmacological and Therapeutic Significance of Kola Nuts," *Ghana Studies* 1 (1998): 1–10; Edmund Abaka, *"Kola Is God's Gift": Agricultural Production, Export Initiatives and the Kola Industry of Asante and the Gold Coast* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005); Merrick Posnansky, "Archaeology and the Origins of the Akan Society in Ghana," in *Problems in Economic and Social Archaeology*, ed. Gale de Giberne Sieveking, Ian H. Longworth, K. E. Wilson, and Grahame Clark (London: Westview, 1976), 49–59.

8. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*; Wilks, "The Mossi and Akan States to 1800," in Ajayi and Crowder, *History of West Africa*, 413–55; Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, *The Early History of the Akan States of Ghana* (London: Red Candle, 1974); Connah, *African Civilizations*; Arhin, "Nature of Akan Government"; James Anquandah, "State Formation among the Akan of Ghana," *Sankofa* 1 (1975): 47–59.

9. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*; Manning, *Slavery and African Life*.

10. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, ch. 2. See also Gérard Chouin, "Forests of Power and Memory: An Archaeology of Sacred Groves in the Eguafo Polity, Southern Ghana (c. 500–1900 A.D.)" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 2009).

11. The coastal "savanna" climate that reaches two or three dozen miles inland today was, six hundred years ago, much smaller. Deforestation has gradually pushed the forest edge farther and farther north.

12. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 223, 234; Robin Law, "The Gold Trade of Whydah in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Henige and McCaskie, *Economic and Social History*, 105–18; Law, "Sea and the Lagoons."

13. The best analysis of Gold Coast maps is by Ray Kea, who studied the settlement patterns of the region in detail. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 23–32. See also Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*, 12–18.

14. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de situ orbis*, ed. George Herbert Tinley Kimble (London: Hakluyt Society, 1937), 120.

15. For samples and discussion of early maps of the Gold Coast, see Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 23–32. See especially a reproduction of the 1629 map on pages 26–28.

16. See, for example, Eric Tilleman [Tylleman], "A Description of the Country of Guinea: The Gold Coast at the End of the Seventeenth Century under the Danes and the Dutch," *Journal of the African Society* 13 (1904): 10–32.

17. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*; Robin Law, ed. *The English in West Africa*, pts. 1, 2, and 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997–2006); Kwame Y. Daaku, "John Konny: The Last Prussian Negro Prince," *Tarikh* 1, no. 4 (1967): 55–64; David Henige, "John Kabes of Komenda: An Early African Entrepreneur and State Builder," *Journal of African History* 18, no. 1 (1977): 1–19.

18. Emmanuel Joseph Peter Brown, *Gold Coast and Asianti Reader*, 2 vols. (London: Brown and Sons, 1929); Fynn, *Oral Traditions*; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*; Adam Jones, *German Sources for West African History, 1599–1669* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Steiner, 1983); Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952); Sanders, "Political Development"; Carl Christian Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante: Based on Traditions, and Historical Facts, Comprising a Period of More Than Three Centuries from About 1500 to 1860* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1966); Christensen, *Double Descent*, 7–12.

19. See especially A. Adu Boahen, "The Origins of the Akan," *Ghana Notes and Queries* 9 (1966): 3–10; Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*, 18–22 and 21n50; Fynn, "Pre-Borbor Fante States"; and Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 145–65.

20. Professor Fynn, who insists that the majority of the coastal population were Akan from the early second millennium CE, acknowledges that the population should be grouped into three categories, distinguishing the "Central Fante" from the people of Shama, Abrem, Eguafo, Komenda, Edina, Oguaa, and Asebu to the

west, and from a third group comprising the Gomoa, Ajumako, Esikuma, Agona, and Efutu states. "Pre-Borbor Fante States," 21.

21. Many of these were reissued in a single volume in Hair, *Africa Encountered*.

22. Ibid., 7:258–61, 9:29–32.

23. Ibid., 7:259–60, 259n44. Dapper's view was reiterated by Jean Barbot, who made two voyages to West Africa in the 1670s and 1680s and noted in his account, "Although Gold Coast is of small extent in every direction, the people who inhabit it speak various languages, especially between Cormentyn and Acra, where four different ones are found, although these two places lie only 20 leagues apart." Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa 1678–1712*, ed. Paul Edward Hedley Hair, Adam Jones, and Robin Law (London: Hakluyt Society, 1992), 2:571.

24. Hair, *Africa Encountered*, 260.

25. Thomas Thompson, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages* (1758; repr., London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937), 70. For Thompson's colorful description of Kurentsi, see pages 47–50.

26. Great Britain, Parliament. "Report from the Select Committee on Papers Relating to the African Forts" in *House of Commons Papers: Reports of Committees*, 7-B.1, 1816.

27. Fynn, "Pre-Borbor Fante States," 21.

28. Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*; Madeline Manoukian, *Akan and Ga-Adangme Peoples of the Gold Coast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950); Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin*.

29. On the double-descent debate, see Christensen, *Double Descent*; James Boyd Christensen, "The Role of the Paternal Line in Fanti Matrilineal Society" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1952); Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 33–34; B. I. Chukwukere, *Cultural Resilience: The Asafo Company System of the Fanti*, Social Studies Project 3 (Cape Coast, Ghana: University College of Cape Coast, 1970); and Hagan, *Divided We Stand*.

30. Christensen, *Double Descent*, 9; Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, ch. 2; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 1–4; Fynn, "Pre-Borbor Fante States"; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 148.

31. For a discussion of this important and developing aspect of African history and historical linguistics, see Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, "Linguistics and History in West Africa," in *Themes in West Africa's History*, ed. Emmanuel Akyeampong (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 52–96.

32. Nana Amonu XI, omanhene of Anomabo Traditional Area, interview by Rebecca Shumway, January 6, 2001; Fynn, *Oral Traditions*; G. R. Acquaah, *Oguaa Aban* (London, 1939); John Brandford Crayner, *Borbor Kukumfi* (Accra, Ghana, 1969); Fynn, "Political System"; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 148.

33. For a discussion of the inaccuracy of European notions of states and kingdoms in precolonial Africa, see Joseph C. Miller, "History and Africa / Africa and History," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 1–32.

34. Reindorf, *Gold Coast and Asante*; E. Brown, *Asianti Reader*; Fynn, *Oral Traditions*; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 145–49.

35. Archaeological research on this grove has not yet begun, although research at other sacred groves in southern Ghana has yielded valuable information about the region's early history. Gérard Chouin, "Sacred Groves as Historical and Archaeological Markers in Southern Ghana," *Ghana Studies* 5 (2002): 177–96; Chouin, "Archae-

ological Perspectives." See also DeCorse, *Archaeology of Elmina*; Christopher DeCorse and Gérard Chouin, "Trouble with Siblings: Archaeological and Historical Interpretation of the West African Past," in *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*, ed. Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 7–15.

36. Pacheco Pereira wrote in 1505 of "Fante the Great" and "Fante the Small." For a more complete discussion of the chronology of Fante oral traditions and historiographical tendencies arising from them, see Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, ch. 5; and J. D. Fage, "A Commentary on Duarte Pacheco Pereira's Account of the Lower Guinea Coastlands in His *Esmeraldo de situ orbis*, and on Some Other Early Accounts," *History in Africa* 7 (1980): 47–80.

37. "Abura Inquiry: Report and Proceedings," 1915, ADM 23/1/262, GNA-CC.

38. Rebecca Shumway, field interviews, 2000–2001.

39. Nana Amonu XI, interview. In the Fante language, the expression *efan tsew fuo* means "those who harvest the efan leaf." Efua Fenua (Mrs. Justina McCarthy), interview by Shumway, January 19, 2001. The Fante term Mfantsefuo means "the Fante people."

40. Central Region Ghana Tourist Board, *The Legends of Mankessim*, pamphlet published in conjunction with the Mankessim Asafo shrine, n.p., [2000?].

41. Italics added. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 24; Albert van Dantzig, "The Akanists: A West African Hansa," in Henige and McCaskie, *Economic and Social History*, 206. The term "Elefante Grande" seems to refer to the inland area of Fante in the original Portuguese sources and is interpreted by Ivor Wilks as referring to the king of Mali. *Forests of Gold*, 7.

42. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 26.

43. "Anomabu [Anomabo] Native Affairs," [1921?], ADM 23/1/193, GNA-CC.

44. Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns," 41–43; McCarthy, *Growth of British Power*, 23–24.

45. For a discussion of "Atlantic creole" culture, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 17–28. For a broader perspective on Atlantic port cities, see Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); and Thornton, *Africa and Africans*.

46. For studies that explore the coast-hinterland relationship elsewhere in Atlantic Africa, see Barry, *Senegambia*; Ralph A. Austen and Jonathan Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers: The Duala and Their Hinterland, c. 1600–c. 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); José C. Curto, *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and Its Hinterland, c. 1550–1830* (Boston: Brill, 2004); and Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*. For the broader Atlantic, see Knight and Liss, *Atlantic Port Cities*.

47. With no knowledge yet of the Americas, the Portuguese explorers of the mid-fifteenth century were searching for gold, not slaves, in African coastal settlements. By far their most important discovery in terms of gold was on the coast of present-day Ghana, where they found gold for sale in abundance in 1472. On gold mining and gold trade in the region, see Richard Bean, "A Note on the Relative Importance of Slaves and Gold in West African Exports," *Journal of African History* 15, no. 3 (1974):

351–56; Blake, *West Africa*; and Walter Rodney, "Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10 (1969): 13–28.

48. Blake, *West Africa*, 93.

49. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

50. Blake, *West Africa*, ch. 2. The amount of gold accumulated by the sponsor of these initial voyages and by the Portuguese Crown was substantial. When Don João II became king of Portugal in 1481, he was so impressed by the quantity of gold available on the coast of Ghana that he set up a permanent base there in the form of Fort São Jorge da Mina, located in the present town of Elmina. Between 1487 and 1489 the coffers in Lisbon received an average annual deposit of 8,000 ounces of gold from this outpost. And between 1494 and 1496 the figure rose to about 22,500 ounces annually. In a few decades, then, this small fishing town had become a significant supplier of gold to the world market. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, 4–5.

51. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 40–41. Danish traders are an exception to this rule and apparently entered into African trade in pursuit of slaves, not gold. Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, sec. 2.

52. Rodney, "Gold and Slaves." In the initial decades of the transatlantic gold trade from Ghana, the Portuguese Crown created a protected preserve on the coast where traders could purchase only gold. The directors of the Dutch West Indies Company followed a similar policy after taking over the main Portuguese forts on the Gold Coast in the 1630s.

53. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

54. In the fifteenth century it took four or five days after a ship's arrival before merchants would arrive from the interior to trade. Account of Eustache de la Fosse (1479–81), as reproduced in Paul Edward Hedley Hair, *The Founding of Castelo de São Jorge da Mina: An Analysis of the Sources* (Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 1994), 129.

55. This has been demonstrated most clearly by Law; see especially "No Resisting the Country," 50–64. See also Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 43–71.

For the Gold Coast, see Priestley, *West African Trade*, 7–9; Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, ch. 3; Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century" (paper presented at the proceedings of the twenty-fifth symposium of the Colston Research Society, London, 1973); and Metcalf, "Microcosm."

On the Portuguese period, see Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*; Blake, *West Africa*; and David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), ch. 3.

56. Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea*, 1:528–32; Peter C. W. Gutkind, "The Canoemen of the Gold Coast (Ghana): A Survey and an Exploration in Precolonial African Labour History," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 29, no. 3 (1989): 339–76; Gutkind, "Trade and Labor in Early Precolonial African History: The Canoemen of Southern Ghana," in *The Workers of African Trade*, ed. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Paul E. Lovejoy (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985), 25–49.

For comparative studies of the coasts of Benin and Nigeria, see Patrick Manning, "Merchants, Porters and Canoemen in the Bight of Benin: Links in the West African Trade Network," in Coquery-Vidrovitch and Lovejoy, *Workers of African Trade*, 51–74; and Law, "Sea and the Lagoons."

57. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 50–54; Kwame Arhin, "The Financing of the Ashanti Expansion (1700–1820)," *Africa* 37, no. 3 (1967): 287.

58. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 27–29; Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*, 63–65; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 54–55.

59. Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*, 144–69.

60. The battle for Elmina began in the 1620s. Ibid., 180–93.

61. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, chs. 3–4. France made serious inroads into the Gold Coast trade beginning in the 1700s. Martin, *Nantes au XVIIIe siècle*; Jean Mettas, *Répertoire des expéditions négrières Françaises au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Société Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer, 1978); J. N. Matson, "The French at Amoku," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society* 1, no. 2 (1953): 47–60.

62. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 40–41. The Royal African Company was a successor to the Royal Adventurers of England Trading to Africa, which was formed in 1662.

63. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 12–16. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*. The growth of Ghana's maritime trade in the seventeenth century was one small component of a broader development of European maritime empires throughout the Atlantic World. The plantation economies of European colonies in the Caribbean expanded rapidly during the mid-seventeenth century. For example, the English conquered Jamaica and began developing plantation agriculture there in 1655.

64. This term was coined by Ira Berlin, in "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1996): 251–88. See also Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 17–28.

65. This included European knowledge of African culture. See Rediker, *Slave Ship*, 206–9.

66. On Akani traders on the coast, see Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 262. On the Gold Coast canoemen, see Law, "Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans"; and Gutkind, "Canoemen."

67. Indeed, Per Hernæs estimates that, overall, gold was a more significant commodity than slaves in the roughly four hundred years of Afro-European trade beginning in the fifteenth century. *African Coast Society*, 320. See also Bean, "Slaves and Gold."

68. Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*, 85–86.

69. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 24–25.

70. Deffontaine, "Pouvoir monarchique"; Jones, *German Sources*, 137.

71. The formation of large states in the interior was a product of several historical processes. The forest Akan had increasingly come in contact with Mande traders from the Western Sudan and therefore become familiar with a mode of political thinking based on large expansionist states. The presence of kinship ties across much of the forest region facilitated the unification of chiefdoms and lineages into larger political formations. Kea has argued that the growth of these states reversed the orientation of Gold Coast societies away from towns and toward the countryside. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 325.

A notable factor in the changed nature of political organization and warfare in the Gold Coast hinterland was the widespread use of imported guns, made possible by the expansion of European trade on the Ghana coast. There has been much debate about the extent of the impact of imported firearms on West African war and politics. A special issue of the *Journal of African History* was dedicated to this topic in

1971 (vol. 12, no. 2). Southern Ghana appears to have experienced as much of a "gunpowder revolution" as any West African region. John Kelly Thornton, "War in the Forest: The Gold Coast," in Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, 55–74.

72. Anthony Ijaola Asiwaju and John Kofi Fynn, "Akan History and Culture," *Akan History and Culture* (Essex, UK: Longman, 1982); Boahen, "Asante and Fante"; Kwasi Boaten, "Asante before 1700," *Research Review* 8, no. 1 (1971): 50–65; Daaku, *Trade and Politics*; John Kofi Fynn, "The Rise of Ashanti," *Ghana Notes and Queries* 9 (1966): 24–30; Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*; McCaskie, *State and Society*; McCaskie, "Making of Asante"; Ivor Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650–1710," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3, no. 2 (1957): 99–136; Wilks, "Mossi and Akan States"; Wilks, *Forests of Gold*.

73. Wilks, "Akwamu Empire."

74. J. K. Kumah, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Denkyira," *Ghana Notes and Queries* 9 (1966): 33–35.

75. Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coasts of Guinea* (1705; repr., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 73; Albert van Dantzig, "English Bosman and Dutch Bosman: A Comparison of Texts," *History in Africa* 2 (1976): 96.

76. Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, ch. 4; Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 201–5.

77. Other spellings include the following: Akani, Acanist, Hacany, Acani, and Arkany.

78. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, ch. 7; Van Dantzig, "Akanists"; Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87.

79. Albert van Dantzig described the Akani as "one of the most intriguing problems in the historiography of Ghana." "Akanists," 205.

80. According to Van Dantzig, the Akani were "probably of diverse ethnic origin, but adopted a kind of lingua franca, Akan" (ibid.). The geographic scope of Akani trade networks has been estimated by Kea, who notes that Akani trade stretched from the coastal zone, through the rain forest, and northward to the wooded savanna north of the rain forest. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 249. Fynn identifies the Akani with the Adanse Kingdom. *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 27.

81. According to Fynn, Denkyira (and then Asante) considered the Akani to be a tributary group, but collection of tribute from the Akani could be achieved only through force. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 41–42.

82. Kea refers to the control of Akani trade by the Assin "state," but the extent of political unification in that region has been called into question by Van Dantzig, who has demonstrated that the Akani (Akanists) were known to consist of numerous competing groups frequently in conflict among themselves. Van Dantzig refers to the Akani as "an independent association of traders" and states that in European sources the term "Akani" seems to have stood for "a profession rather than for a nationality." Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 251–53; Van Dantzig, "Akanists," 208–9, 214.

83. Van Dantzig, "Akanists," 205. Van Dantzig has argued that the Akani contributed to a process of "Akanizing" the forest zone of this part of West Africa. See also Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, ch. 2; and Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 3–4, 14. The influence of Akan traders extended as far east as Ouidah, where Akan names were adopted by some coastal people. Law, *Ouidah*, 40–41.

84. Law has argued that references to Akani wars against other states are proof that there was indeed an Akani state. *English in West Africa* 2:250n13, 250, and doc. nos. 651, 710, 720, 743. Van Dantzig has argued that the term "Akani" referred to a person's profession—a gold trader—and did not refer to that person's association with a geographic location, government, or ethnicity. "Akanists," 208. Daaku has argued that the Akani polity consisted of "a loose confederation of states with kinship ties." *Trade and Politics*, 146.

85. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, ch. 2, p. 261.

86. Eric Tilleman, *A Short and Simple Account of the Country Guinea and Its Nature*, trans. Selena Axelrod Winsnes (1697; repr., Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 1994), 31; Dapper's original text reads, "les impots des marchandises que les Acanistes viennent acheter sur leurs terres." "Description de l'Afrique," in *Objets Interdits*, ed. Albert van Dantzig (Paris: Fondation Dapper, 1989), 202–3. The Akani launched a commercial campaign to gain control over the routes connecting the central Ghana coast with the gold-producing interior. A Dutch report of 1659 states that the Akani had for many years controlled "all trade between the Castle de Mina and Cormantyn, having excluded from that trade all their neighbors, so that at Mina, Cabo Cors, Congh, Mouree, Annemabo, Adia, and Cormantyn one can trade with nobody except them." Van Dantzig, "Akanists," 211. The Akani also traded west of Elmina at Komenda. Law, *English in West Africa*, 3:136n6.

87. Van Dantzig, "Akanists"; Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, p. 256, map 7.1.

88. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 77, as quoted in Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 248.

89. Tilleman, Eric. *A Short and Simple Account of the Country Guinea and Its Nature*, trans. Selena Axelrod Winsnes (1697; repr., Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 1994), ch. 8.

90. Jones, *German Sources*, 247–48. Johan Müller was a German employed by the Danish African Company between 1661 and 1669.

91. Johan Müller in ibid., 248.

92. Law, *English in West Africa*, 2:178. The main European trade forts employed a "linguist," or translator. This was usually an African or mulatto man who facilitated communication between Europeans and Africans.

93. Miller, *Way of Death*, chs. 6–7; Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests*, 211–18.

94. The Akani did, however, use slave labor in their commerce. Jones, *German Sources*, 254–55.

95. Ray Kea has analyzed the decline of the Akani trading organization as a commercial, political, and social phenomenon of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 86, 285–87. See also Postma, *Dutch*, 87.

96. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 286.

97. Ibid.

98. Van Dantzig, "Akanists," 212.

99. While Kromantse was the larger town in the early seventeenth century, Barbot noted even then that Anomabo was "generally speaking . . . the best landing place on the whole coast of Fantyn." *Barbot on Guinea*, 2:416.

100. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 56; Van Dantzig, "English Bosman," 210.

101. Law, *English in West Africa*, 2:190, 243.

102. Abura was an important center of Borbor Fante trade and the residence of chiefs who appear to have been involved in the growing regional influence of the Borbor Fante polity in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See, for example, ibid., 253. The chiefs of Mankessim and Abura sometimes struggled against each other for the status of inland capital of Fante. Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 162.

103. Kwame Y. Daaku, "Trade and Trading Patterns of the Akan in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, ed. Claude Meillassoux (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 173–74.

104. Ibid. Compared to gold and ivory, enslaved human beings obviously required far more canoes and canoemen for this purpose.

105. Greene, *Social Change*; Law, *Ouidah*; Law, *Slave Coast*.

106. Northrup, *Trade without Rulers*; Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Anglo-Efik Relations and Protection against Illegal Enslavement at Old Calabar, 1740–1807," in Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*, 101–18.

107. For example, the polity known as Fetu was invaded by an army estimated at twenty thousand men in 1694 and the king of Fetu was forced to flee in the wake of this war; yet Fetu had reemerged as a polity by 1708, when an army of "Fanteens" attacked and took the king of Fetu captive. Thomas Phillips, "Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693, 1694, from England to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa; and Thence Along the Coast of Guiney. . . ." in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, ed. John Churchill, 6 vols. (London: Awnsham and Churchill, 1732), 208; Charles Hayes, John Chaigneau, and William Hickes, Cape Coast Castle (hereafter CCC), January 15 and March 7, 1708, T70/5, PRO.

108. Coastal societies in many parts of West and West Central Africa experienced an escalation in warfare and general violence in the wake of Atlantic slaving activity. See, for example, Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*; Greene, *Social Change*; Law, *Slave Coast*; Robin Law, "Warfare on the West African Slave Coast, 1650–1850," in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1992), 103–26; and Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*.

109. McCaskie, "Making of Asante"; Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, ch. 7; Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 93n170, n171; Kumah, "Rise and Fall."

110. Rademacher Arch., no. 587, "Report Heerman Abramsz to Assembly of Ten, 23 November 1679," in *The Dutch and the Guinea Coast 1674–1742: A Collection of Documents from the General State Archive at the Hague*, trans. Albert van Dantzig (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1978), 17.

111. Barbot suggested the occurrence of only intermittent warfare when he was on the central Gold Coast in the late 1670s and early 1680s. But Europeans resident there later in the 1680s remarked on "wars of long duration." *Barbot on Guinea*, letter 30, 1:604–13; Tilleman, *Short and Simple Account*, 23.

112. James Nightingale to CCC, February 18, 1688, MS Rawlinson C. 747, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*, 183–202. In February 1694 the agents at Cape Coast Castle advised that there was no trade on the Gold Coast, because "the country was all in wars." Phillips, "Journal of a Voyage," 201.

113. James Nightingale to CCC, February 18, 1688, MS Rawlinson, C. 747, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

114. See Philip D. Curtin's "political model" in *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975). Firearms became common in Gold Coast warfare around 1650. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 158–60.

115. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, esp. pp. 150–51.

116. Tilleman, *Short and Simple Account*, 21.

117. Eric Tilleman was an army officer in the Danish-Norwegian service, made three voyages to West Africa between 1682 and 1689, and lived there a total of nine years.

118. Tilleman, *Short and Simple Account*, 19–24.

119. WIC 124, D.-G. and Council, "Elmina, 18 June 1689," in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 49–50.

120. Law, *English in West Africa*, 2:xv.

121. WIC 124, D.-G. and Council, "Elmina, 24 November 1693," in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 55–56.

122. The Komenda Wars actually consisted of two series of wars, the first occurring between 1687 and 1688 and the second from 1694 to 1700. Many different spellings occur in the contemporary documentation as well as more recent historiography. Bosman wrote of the "Commanian War." *Accurate Description*, 29. Another common spelling is "Komenda." According to Robin Law, the conflict was rooted in the mid-seventeenth century. For a recent reinterpretation of the events of the Komenda Wars, see Law, "The Komenda Wars, 1694–1700: A Revised Narrative," *History in Africa* 34 (2007): 133–68.

123. Such treaties were rarely binding, and African signees understood their meaning quite differently from the Europeans.

124. S. Van Brakel, "Short Memoir on Trade within the Present Limits of the Charter of the WIC," in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 10–12.

125. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 31.

126. The Rawlinson papers reveal an error in Bosman's account of Staphorst's actions. Law, "Komenda Wars," 146–47.

127. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 35; Law, "Komenda Wars," 146–47.

128. Law, "Komenda Wars," 166–67.

129. Phillips, "Journal of a Voyage," 224–25.

130. Ibid., 208, 224–25.

131. At this time, the Fante were considered "powerful enough to tame two kings of Commany." Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 35; Van Dantzig, "English Bosman," 202.

132. John Snow, July 31, 1705, in Kenneth Gordon Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London: Longmans, 1957), 369.

133. See, for instance, Elmina Journal ("Axim Correspondence"), April 18, 1742, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 356.

134. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

135. Roughly 90 percent of enslaved Africans sold on the Ghana coast departed between 1695 and 1805 (estimated 1,097,100 out of 1,209,300). Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

136. Gold continued to be a principal item of export from the ports of the Ghana coast well into the eighteenth century, but the gold trade did not again surpass the trade in human captives until after the abolition of the slave trade. The export of gold rapidly expanded in the early nineteenth century, following abolition of the slave trade. Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, 327n73. In general, the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade from Ghana appears to have suppressed the export trade in gold because human captives earned African merchants a greater profit on their investments. It simply cost less to kidnap a person than to operate a gold mine in the early eighteenth century. On the low-investment and high-return nature of slave production in the African interior, see Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 34, 99–102. To a limited extent the gold trade on Ghana's coast was reversed in that Europeans sometimes paid for enslaved Africans with gold. Gold continued to form a key part of the trade between Akan speakers and their northern neighbors in the Western Sudan. As the transatlantic slave trade grew, however, the territories north of Akanland increasingly became suppliers of enslaved human beings, in exchange for which they received European imports in addition to gold.

137. Rodney, "Gold and Slaves"; Priestley, *West African Trade*; Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*; Bean, "Slaves and Gold"; Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*; Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade 1700–1807* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981); Postma, *Dutch*; Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*; Robin Law, "The Royal African Company of England's West African Correspondence, 1681–1699," *History in Africa* 20 (1993): 173–84; Hernæs, *African Coast Society*; David Eltis and David Richardson, "Prices of African Slaves Newly Arrived in the Americas, 1673–1865: New Evidence of Long-Run Trends and Regional Differentials," in *Slavery in the Development of the Americas*, ed. David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis, and Kenneth L. Sokoloff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187.

138. W. De La Palma to Association of Ten, September 5, 1705, Elmina, WIC 98, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 111–13.

139. This point is fundamental to Lovejoy's book, *Transformations in Slavery*. See especially chapter 3. Manning, *Slavery and African Life*; Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*.

140. Lovejoy writes, "Slavery was virtually always initiated through violence that reduced the status of a person from a condition of freedom and citizenship to a condition of slavery. The most common type of violence has been warfare, in which prisoners were enslaved. Variations in the organization of such violence—including raids whose purpose was to acquire slaves, banditry, and kidnapping—indicate that violent enslavement can be thought of as falling on a continuum from large-scale political action, in which enslavement may be only a by-product of war and not its cause, to small-scale criminal activity, in which enslavement is the sole purpose of the action." *Transformations in Slavery*, 3.

Chapter 2

1. Knight and Liss, *Atlantic Port Cities*; Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*.

2. Law, "No Resisting the Country"; Gutkind, "Trade and Labor." See also Rediker, *Slave Ship*, 293–4; Stephanie E. Smallwood, "African Guardians, European Slave

Ships and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Early Modern Atlantic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 64, no. 4 (2007): 679–716.

3. David Mill to Richard Miles, July 16, 1775, T70/1534, PRO.

4. On the millie trade, see Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, 337–49. Millie, which appears to have been a term referring to both maize and millet, was both a staple and a cash crop for African farmers. Hernæs argues that millie held an unrivaled position as the most important staple food for human cargos of Gold Coast slavers throughout the eighteenth century because it was storable, cheaply transportable, and relatively inexpensive and because it was grown near the source of slaves. Root crops, by contrast, took up a lot more space.

5. Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

6. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, ch. 3.

7. David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London: Cass, 1997), 17; Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

8. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

9. Eltis and Richardson, *Routes to Slavery*, 22, 22n10.

10. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 83–7.

11. David Mill to Richard Miles, [1771?], T70/1531, PRO.

12. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 37–9.

13. Ibid.; McCaskie, *State and Society*. McCaskie's study focuses on the nineteenth century and therefore considers the impact of the ending of the Atlantic slave trade on Asante more than the impact of the trade itself.

14. Kwame Arhin, "Asante Military Institutions," *Journal of African Studies* 7, no. 1 (1980): 22–30; Arhin, "Ashanti Expansion"; Donna J. E. Maier, "Military Acquisition of Slaves in Asante," in Henige and McCaskie, *Economic and Social History*, 119–32; Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, 23–7; S. Tenkorang, "The Importance of Firearms in the Struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 9 (1968): 1–16; Emmanuel Terray, "Contribution à une étude de l'armée Asante," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 16, no. 1–2 (1976): 297–356; Terray, "Nature et fonctions de la guerre dans le monde Akan," in *Guerres de lignanges et guerres d'etat en Afrique*, ed. Emmanuel Terray and Jean Bazin (Paris: Edition des Archives Contemporaines, 1982), 378–421; René Allou Kouame, "L'hegemonie Asante sur l'Abron Gyaman, 1740–1875: Plus d'un Siecle de Domination et de Resistence," *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale di Studi e Documentazione* 47, no. 2 (1992): 173–83.

15. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 81–3.

16. John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brazil and the West Indies in His Majesty's Ships, the "Swallow" and "Weymouth"* (1735; repr., London: Cass, 1970), 188.

17. Reindorf, *Gold Coast and Asante*, 132.

18. Arhin, "Asante Military Institutions," 28–9.

19. For a list of Asante military campaigns see Maier, "Military Acquisition," 130.

20. Tribute slaves came into Asante in two forms: in one large "payment" from a recently conquered state as proof of submission, often hundreds or thousands at a time, and as an annual tribute from places such as Akuapem, western Gonja, and Kpembe (usually a thousand slaves per year). Maier estimates that the number of captives taken in war rarely exceeded the number brought annually as tribute to

the central provinces of Asante. "Military Acquisition," 121, 127–8. See also Arhin, "Ashanti Expansion," which discusses tribute slaves on pages 286–87 and slaves acquired as "loot" during and after wars on pages 289–90.

21. Kwame Arhin, "Diffuse Authority among the Coastal Fanti," *Ghana Notes and Queries* 9 (1966): 66–70; Arhin, "Ashanti Expansion."

22. Arhin, "Ashanti Expansion."

23. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, 127–67; Arhin, "Ashanti Expansion"; Paul E. Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola: The Hausa Kola Trade 1700–1900* (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bellow University Press, 1980), 11–24. See also Joseph Raymond LaTorre, "Wealth Surpasses Everything: An Economic History of Asante, 1750–1874" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1978).

24. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 57–83.

25. See Parker, *Making the Town*, 29–31.

26. Rebecca Shumway, "Accra," in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage*, ed. Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), 17–18.

27. Governor E. W. White to the African Committee, May 5, 1809, as reproduced in Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 14.

28. Thomas Boteler and William Husbands to Thomas Melvil, CCC, July 23, 1751, T70/1517, PRO.

29. Ray A. Kea, "'I Am Here to Plunder on the General Road': Bandits and Banditry in the Pre-Nineteenth Century Gold Coast," in *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa*, ed. Donald Crummey (London: Currey, 1986), 109–32.

30. Paul Erdmann Isert, *Letters on West Africa and the Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 135.

31. Paul E. Lovejoy and Toyin Falola, eds., *Pawnship, Slavery and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003); Peter Haenger, *Slaves and Slave Holders on the Gold Coast: Towards an Understanding of Social Bondage in West Africa* (Basel, Switzerland: Schlettwein, 2000); Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (1999): 333–55; Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "'Pawns Will Live When Slaves Is Apt to Dye': Credit, Risk and Trust at Old Calabar in the Era of the Slave Trade" (paper presented at the Institute of African Studies, Emory University, 1996); George Metcalf, "Gold, Assortments and the Trade Ounce: Fante Merchants and the Problem of Supply and Demand in the 1770s," *Journal of African History* 28, no. 1 (1987): 27–41.

32. Mill to Beard, CCC, September 17, 1775, ADM 1/2/417, Ghana National Archives–Accra (hereafter GNA-A).

33. Peter Holt, June 20, 1715, Anomabo, T70/6, PRO. The outcome of this particular incident is unknown.

34. Dalzel to Gordon, August 9, 1797, CCC, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A; Dalzel to Bullen, August 15, 1797, CCC, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A.

35. Sir Dalby Thomas, December 11, 1709, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

36. Mill to Beard, Weuves and Deakin, March 17, 1776, ADM 1/2/417, GNA-A.

37. This practice was done, for example, by the people of Komenda against the Adom in 1776. Mourgue to Beard, February [1?], 1776, CCC, ADM 1/2/417, GNA-A.

38. WIC 102, Haring to Association of Ten, WIC, March 4, 1714, Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

39. Sir Dalby Thomas, September 12, 1709, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

40. Beard to Mill, January 3, 1776, Komenda Fort, ADM 1/2/417, GNA-A.

41. The cannons were mounted facing the sea, indicating that European maritime powers were a threat, not Africans.

42. Some of these were abandoned or fell into the hands of a different company over the course of the eighteenth century. For more particular data on these forts, see J. D. Fage et al., "A New Check List of the Forts and Castles of Ghana," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society* 4 (1959): 57–68; Arnold Walter Lawrence, *Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963); Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*; and Matson, "French at Amoku."

43. The soldiers living in the forts and castles were more often so-called mulattos—offspring of a European and an African—than Europeans by the mid-eighteenth century. The agents of the English company claimed that these men were "better suited to the climate" but also admitted that it was much cheaper to employ local men than to have them sent from Europe. David Mill, July 29, 1774, CCC, T70/32, PRO; "Gilbert Petrie to Committee, on Board the Ship Cecilia in Barbadoes," July 31, 1769, Adm. 1/3810, PRO; Thomas Miles to Committee, August 19, 1791, London, BT6/69, PRO.

44. By contrast, during the period of European colonial rule from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, the interplay between Africans and Europeans can be thought of as a "closed interactive system," in which Europeans were able to impose their economic and political plans on Africans in the colonies. Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, 308.

45. Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, 318–20, 331–33, 336.

46. David Henige, "'Companies Are Always Ungrateful': James Phipps of Cape Coast, a Victim of the African Trade," *African Economic History* 9 (1980): 27–47; "Richard Brew on African Affairs, 1768," T70/1531, PRO; David Richardson, "Profitability in the Bristol-Liverpool Slave Trade," *Revue Francaise d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 62, no. 1/2 (1975): 301–8.

47. Jere. Tinker and John Cope, June 3, 1737, CCC, T70/4, PRO; Brathwaite and Peake, October 6, 1731, CCC, T70/4, PRO.

48. Ships would bring certain luxury goods, including wine and cheese, to the governors and high-ranking officials.

49. Gutkind, "Trade and Labor."

50. One British agent, exasperated by repeated desertions from British ships, argued that no deserters should be received by either side [English or Dutch] and that agents who break "articles so agreed on by both companyes" should be sent home. John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO, in Davies, *Royal African Company*, 367–71.

51. The most common diseases were probably malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery.

52. John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO.

53. John Roberts to William Price, April 5, 1751, CCC, T70/1477, PRO.

54. "Richard Brew on African Affairs, 1768," T70/1531, PRO.

55. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 48–62; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 147–48; John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO.

56. Memorandum, October 10, 1781, CCC, T70/152, PRO, fol. 111.

57. For example, one Mr. Thurloe was removed from a post in 1709 when local people reported to Sir Dalby Thomas that "they could not live under him." Abstracts of Letters, September 30, 1707–July 22, 1713, T70/2, PRO. Similarly, one Mr. Greenhill was removed from command at Anomabo Fort in 1760 because, as the governor at Cape Coast Castle explained, the local people had refused him and "he must quit the fort, or they will endeavour to starve him out of it." William Mutter to Committee, October 15, 1760, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

58. On Anglo-Dutch relations in the broader Atlantic World, see David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650–1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

59. Hernæs, *African Coast Society*.

60. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 37–39.

61. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 37–38.

62. Postma, *Dutch*, 73–76.

63. For example, Sir Dalby Thomas recommended in 1705 that the agents of the Dutch and English companies unify their efforts on the coast, advising that if this was done, "trade would flourish." Abstracts, 1705, T70/5, PRO, 6.

64. Grosvenor and Phipps, September 16 and October 14, 1711, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

65. Postma, *Dutch*, 73–76; Memorandum, October 10, 1781, CCC, T70/152, PRO.

66. Roberts to Lascelles, March 23, 1750 (dated 1749 according to the Julian Calendar), T70/1476, PRO; Thomas Boteler and William Husbands to Thomas Melvil, July 23, 1751, CCC, T70/1517, PRO.

67. On the history and nature of palavers at Accra, see Hernæs, *African Coast Society*, 99–127.

68. David Mill to Richard Miles, July 16, 1775, T70/1534, PRO.

69. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 50–54.

70. Sir Dalby Thomas, May 8, 1709, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

71. Unfortunately, Nyendael returned from his journey seriously ill and died eight days later, unable to write any report.

72. Sir Dalby Thomas, September 30, 1708, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

73. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 129–32.

74. Larry W. Yarak, "The 'Elmina Note': Myth and Reality in Asante-Dutch Relations," *History in Africa* 13 (1986): 363–82; Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*, ch. 3.

75. See Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*, ch. 4.

76. William Dacres to Thomas Boteler, October 12, 1749, Prampram, T70/1515, PRO.

77. Hippisley, July 13, 1766, CCC, T70/31, PRO; David Mill to Committee, June 26, 1772, CCC, T70/31, PRO.

78. See, for example, David Mill to Committee, June 26, 1772, CCC, T70/31, PRO.

79. Elmina Journal NBKG 106, May 23, 1742, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 358–59.

80. Thomas Melvil, November 5, 1751, CCC, T70/1517, PRO.

81. John Roberts to [?], 1751, CCC, T70/1477, PRO.

82. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 113.

83. Minutes of Council, October 25, 1767, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

84. Meeting of Council, August 11, 1772, CCC, T70/152, PRO.

85. See Torrane to Committee, July 20, 1807 (received October 9), CCC, T70/35, PRO.

86. David Mill to Committee, June 26, 1772, CCC, T70/31, PRO.

87. Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*, 93.

88. Kwame Arhin, *The Cape Coast and Elmina Handbook: Past, Present and Future* (Legon: University of Ghana, Institute of African Studies, 1995), 3.

89. Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

90. Memorandum, October 10, 1781, CCC, T70/152, PRO, fol. 111.

91. Anomabo does appear prominently in the works of Margaret Priestley and James Sanders. See also Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 149–52; and Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 175.

92. On the distinction between "fort trade" and "boat trade," see Rediker, *Slave Ship*, 78, 206.

93. "Fort at Annamaboe," Adm. 1/3810, PRO; Nana Amonu XI, omanhene of Anomabo Traditional Area, interview by Shumway, January 6, 2001; Efua Fenua, interview; Fare Guamu Apetempe, No. 3 Drumming and Singing Group, interview by Shumway, January 26, 2001. See also E. Brown, *Asianti Reader*, 1:74.

94. For estimates of the growth of local markets in this area and other indices of population growth, see Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 57–64.

95. "Deed of Cession Made by the People of Fantyn . . . to the General Chartered Company," in Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, app. 2, p. 185.

96. Daaku has argued that treaties signed between Africans and Europeans in this period were considered by Africans to signify only that the Europeans had a right to a share of their trade, and that they were never considered as granting any monopoly rights. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 59–60.

97. Ibid., 55–56.

98. Rademacher Arch., no. 587. "Report Heerman Abramsz to Assembly of Ten, 23 November 1679," in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 13–20.

99. Van Dantzig, *Forts and Castles*, 24, 34, 35.

100. Law, *English in West Africa*, 3:277.

101. Law, *English in West Africa*, 1:92, 2:153, 3:277–78.

102. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 69, table 2.6.

103. Law, *English in West Africa*, 3:277–78.

104. Law, *English in West Africa*, 1:92.

105. In addition, the leaders of Anomabo took advantage of a power struggle over succession to the position of "Braffo of Fante" in the 1690s, advancing their own independence. James Nightingale to CCC, Anomabo, February 23, 1688; and Robert Elwes to CCC, Agga, February 23, 1688, MS Rawlinson, C. 747, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Fynn, "Political System," 119n21.

106. Law, *English in West Africa*, pt. 2, ch. 6; pt. 3, ch. 6.

107. Freeman, Thomas Peck, William Hicks, CCC, to RAC, November 6, 1701, T70/175, PRO; Cooper [Chaplain], CCC, to RAC, September 19, 1701, Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 3–4.

108. John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO.

109. Ibid. In 1698 England's parliament effectively ended the monopoly of the Royal African Company when it passed the Africa Trade Act, opening the slave trade

to all English citizens on payment of a 10 percent duty on imports and exports. English merchants who engaged in this trade were known as Ten Percenters, and the trade itself was known as the Ten Percent trade. William A. Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave: Politics and the Escalation of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688–1714," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2007): 3–38.

110. John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO, as quoted in Davies, *Royal African Company*, app. 5. The word "brandering" is probably a misspelling of "brandeeing," which refers to the initiation of a dispute, as described in William Hutton, *A Voyage to Africa: Including a Narrative of an Embassy to One of the Interior Kingdoms, in the Year 1820* (London: Longman, 1821), 87; and Meredith, *Account*, 114.

111. Matson, "French at Amoku," 47.

112. The principal years of Atlantic piracy were in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 162–73.

113. Sir Dalby Thomas to RAC, Oct 28, 1710, T70/2, PRO. On the private trade at Anomabo, see also John Snow to Royal African Company, July 31, 1705, T70/102, PRO, as quoted in Davies, *Royal African Company*, app. 5; and Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave."

114. Atkins, *Voyage to Guinea*, 169–70.

115. Ibid., 188.

116. Charles Hayes, John Chaigneau, and William Hickes, January 15 and March 7, 1708, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

117. Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer, *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. and ed. Selena Axelrod Winsnes (1760; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 170–71.

118. Kurentsi's name appears with a variety of spellings in European records, including Corrantee, Corrantryn, Courantier, Courantee, Koranting, and Kurantsi. See, for example, Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 63–64, 95–96, 178–79, 241; Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 262, 349, 351; and Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 34–58.

119. Melvil described Kurentsi as "very old." Thomas Melvil, July 11, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO; Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 150.

120. For the early Fante migrants, see chapter 1. On the town quarters of Mankessim, see E. Brown, *Asianti Reader*, 1:53–56. There is still a quarter in Mankessim called Kurentsi.

121. Melvil to Committee, July 11, 1751, T70/1517, PRO; and Matthew Buckle, HMS *Assistance*, to Secretary to the Admiralty, February 19, 1752, Adm. 1/1485, PRO, both cited in Priestley, *West African Trade*, 14n4.

122. Melvil to Committee, March 14, 1752, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

123. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 47–48.

124. Ibid; Priestley, *West African Trade*, 21–22.

125. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 57–58; Priestley, *West African Trade*, 42.

126. Priestley, *West African Trade*, 13–14.

127. There is some evidence to suggest that there were actually two amanhenfuo (sing. omanhen) named John Currantee in succession, but it is as yet unclear. Nana Amonu XI suggests that the first omanhen of Anomabo was Baisie Kurentsi and the second one was Eno Baisie Kurentsi. Nana Amonu XI, interviews, January 25 and 6, 2001. Sanders points out a report by Mutter in 1764 announcing Currantee's

death and suggests that the second John Currantee may have ruled for the following decade. "Political Development," 276–77.

128. Committee to RAC, December 25, 1743, Adm. 1/3810, PRO, as cited in Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 40.

129. Matson, "French at Amoku," 47.

130. George Hamilton et al. to Tinker and Cope, Ship *Argyle*, September 8, 1737, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

131. "Chalmer, Husband and Crichton to the Lords Commissioners of the Lord High Admiral of Great Britain & Ireland," December 21, 1748, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

132. Crooks, *Gold Coast Settlements*, 22.

133. Matson, "French at Amoku," 48.

134. "Fort at Annamaboe, June 17, 1752," Adm. 1/3810, PRO, 2.

135. Ibid., 3–4.

136. Report from John Apperley, Engineer Superintendent at Annamaboe, to the Honourable Board of Ordnance, Annamaboe, 9 March 1753," as reprinted in Crooks, *Gold Coast Settlements*, 23–24.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid. These two sections of Anomabo still distinguish the part of town where the Anomabohene resides, near the main road, and the part of town along the beach, where fishermen live.

139. "Report from John Apperley, 9 March 1753," in Crooks, *Gold Coast Settlements*, 23–24.

140. "Honeycomb" referred to a particular kind of flaw in the metal of iron weapons and indicated faulty casting. William Henry Smyth and Sir Edward Belcher, *The Sailor's Word-Book: An Alphabetical Digest of Nautical Terms, Including Some More Especially Military and Scientific . . . as well as Archaisms of Early Voyagers, Etc* (London: Blackie and Son, 1867), 387.

141. Priestley, *West African Trade*, 43.

142. Ibid., 10–11.

143. Thomas Melvil, March 14, 1752, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

144. Royal African, *The Royal African; or, Memoirs of the Young Prince of Annamaboe* (London: Reeve, n.d., c. 1750).

145. "Fort at Annamaboe," Adm. 1/3810, PRO, 11–12.

146. Ibid., 20.

147. Melvil to Committee, May 30, 1753, as copied in ibid., 22–23.

148. "Fort at Annamaboe," Adm. 1/3810, PRO, 15–18.

149. Melvil to Committee, January 25, 1753, as copied in ibid., 20. The phrases "to eat" or "to chop" are local expressions meaning to gain something or to enjoy life (because one is wealthy).

150. Melvil to Committee, September 22, 1753," as copied in ibid., 23.

151. "Fort at Annamaboe," Adm. 1/3810, PRO, 20.

152. Ibid.

153. Melvil to Committee, June 24, 1754, as copied in ibid., 23–24.

154. William Mutter to Committee, October 15, 1760, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

155. Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

156. "Remarks on the Coast of Guinea (the Gambia, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, &C.): Sailing Instructions, Trade, Climate, Customs, Provisions, &c., 1765–71," MSS Afr. s. 9, Rhodes House, Oxford.

157. William Mutter to Committee, October 15, 1760, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

158. "Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

159. Richard Brew to Richard Miles, February 22, 1776, Castle Brew, T70/1534, PRO.

160. Nana Budu Kuma IV (John K. Fynn), Chief of Abura Dunkwa, Nyifahene of Abura State, interview by Shumway, March 2, 2001.

161. T70/1022, PRO.

162. Fynn described him as an *osahen*. Nana Budu Kuma IV, interview.

163. David Mill, December 30, 1775, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

164. Governor [R. Miles] and Council, September 25, 1778, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

165. Richard Brew to Richard Miles, February 22, 1776, Castle Brew, T70/1534, PRO.

166. David Mill, December 30, 1775, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

167. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 126.

168. Meeting of Council, October 19, 1780, CCC, T70/152, PRO, fol. 102.

169. John Weuves to Richard Miles, November/December 1776, T70/1534, PRO; B. Weuves wrote, "Receive herewith Ammoney's Flag. It did not protect Ogilvie & me from the Tantum Rascals, for notwithstanding we had it, they were near carrying us both into the bush and wou'd not let us into the Fort for a long while. I was never used in so rascally a manner by any People."

170. A fetish day is a day on which special rules of conduct are dictated by local spiritual traditions.

171. The expression "putting fetish on the gate" was used by Europeans to refer to the placement of an object or marker at the fort entrance that would immediately alert the townspeople to the fact that there was a dispute between local African elites and the Europeans in the fort. For a similar account from the seventeenth century, see Law, *English in West Africa* 2:196–97.

172. William Feilde, April 18, 1791, CCC, T70/33, PRO; William Fielde, Meeting of Council at CCC, May 11, 1791, T70/153, PRO; Edgar Hickman, ibid.; John Gordon, ibid.

173. Edgar Hickman, Meeting of Council at CCC, May 11, 1791, T70/153, PRO; William Roberts, ibid., fols. 173–76; William Fielde, ibid.; William Feilde, April 18, 1791, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

174. Edgar Hickman, Meeting of Council at CCC, May 11, 1791, T70/153, PRO; William Roberts, ibid.

175. William Feilde, April 18, 1791, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

176. William Roberts, Meeting of Council at CCC, May 11, 1791, T70/153, PRO.

177. Crooks, *Gold Coast Settlements*, 87–88.

178. See Robin Law, ed., *From Slave Trade to "Legitimate" Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

179. Gerrard Gore, James Phipps, and Robert Bleau, CCC, to RAC, March 23, 1714, T70/3, PRO.

Chapter 3

1. The main collection of primary sources in English is the T70 series (*Africa Companies*) in the PRO. For Dutch records, see Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, n.d.; and Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*. Danish sources can be found in Ole Justesen, ed., *Danish Sources for the History of Ghana, 1657–1754*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2005).

2. For an insightful discussion of this aspect of traditional rulers' authority, see Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, 21–31. On the ancient phenomenon of "clan chiefs" as political authorities in Niger-Congo civilization, see Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800.* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 45–46.

3. John Fynn suggests a Fante-language name for this coalition—Mfantse Ahemfo Nhyiamu (lit. Fante Council of Chiefs)—see "Political System."

4. Asante's conquest of the coast began in 1807 but was concluded with a second invasion in 1816.

5. The expansion of a Fante state in this period is suggested by Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 27, 36; Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 166; and Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 86.

6. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 86.

7. Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 27–28.

8. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 286.

9. Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante," 363, 357.

10. Sanders calls attention to the need for more analysis of the internal workings of coastal history in this period (ibid., 363).

11. The term *warlord* is used here to indicate a political authority whose status depends largely on military capability. Warlords of this type were common in Atlantic Africa during the slave trade era. See Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 112–15. Fynn uses the term *osahin*, defined as a "war-chief," to refer to the same group. "Political System," 111. Kea refers to these individuals by another indigenous Akan term, *owuraſram*, meaning "master of firepower." *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 164–68 and esp. 286.

12. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, ch. 4.

13. Ibid., 68.

14. Law, *Slave Coast*, 225–60; Law, *Ouidah*, 50–70.

15. Walter Hawthorne, "The Production of Slaves Where There Was No State: The Guinea-Bissau Region, 1450–1815," *Slavery and Abolition* 20, no. 2 (1999): 97–124; Hawthorne, "Strategies of the Decentralized: Defending Communities from Slave Raiders in Coastal Guinea-Bissau, 1450–1815," in Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*, 152–69; Lovejoy and Richardson, "Anglo-Efik Relations"; John N. Oriji, "Igboland, Slavery, and the Drums of War and Heroism," in Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*, 121–31.

16. Thornton, *Kingdom of Kongo*; Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola, 1575–1680," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 2 (1988): 360–78; Joseph C. Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angloa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), ch. 7.

17. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 87.

18. A recent collection of studies takes up this issue: Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade.*

19. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 68.

20. John Kofi Fynn, "Asante and Akyem Relations, 1700–1831," *IAS Research Review* 9 (1973): 58–81.

21. Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*, 97–99.

22. The records of the Royal Africa Company note that in 1708 "The king of Ashantee sent to know if Sir Dalby was willing he should open the wayes [trade paths] by destroying those [coastal polities] that opposed it—which he answered in generall termes so farr as it might tend to the advantage of Trade." Sir Dalby Thomas, September 30, 1708, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

23. Davies, *Royal African Company*, 289–90; Henige, "Companies Are Always Ungrateful"; Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 68–69, 152–54.

24. Charles Hayes, John Chaigneau, and William Hickes, January 15 and March 7, 1708, CCC, T70/5, PRO; Elmina Journal NBKG 81, November 27, 1709, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 146–47. See also Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*, chs. 8–9.

25. Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante," 352.

26. Sir Dalby Thomas to RAC, October 28, 1710, T70/2, PRO; Sir Dalby Thomas, April 9, 1710, CCC, T70/5, PRO; Sir Dalby Thomas, August 16, 1710, ibid.; Sir Dalby Thomas, August 23, and October 28, 1710, ibid.; Seth Grosvenor and James Phipps, January 10, 1710, ibid.; Grosvenor and Phipps, June 10, 1711, ibid.; Grosvenor and Phipps, May 16, 21, and 29, 1711, ibid.; Grosvenor and Phipps, July 24, 1711, ibid.; Grosvenor and Phipps, July 11, 1712, ibid.; Grosvenor and Phipps, October 19, 1712, ibid.; Grosvenor, Phipps, and Bleau, CCC, to RAC, October 6, 1713, T70/3, PRO.

27. Director-General H. Haring, Fiscal Frederick Hoevenaar and Councillors Engelgraaff, Robberts, and A. Snocck, Elmina, to Association of Ten, WIC, Amsterdam, August 15, 1712, WIC 101, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 168–69.

28. Willem Bosman states that the "Fantynean country" had the strongest port town on the coast (Anomabo) and that Fante as a whole had five times as many armed men as the Kingdoms of Asebu or Komenda. *Accurate Description*, 56; Van Dantzig, "English Bosman," 210.

29. Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea*, 1:415.

30. Phipps, Dodson, Boye, and Stevenson, October 17, 1720, CCC, T70/7, PRO.

31. Tinker, Rice, and Wingfield, August 11, 1724, CCC, T70/7, PRO.

32. Resolutions and Director-General and Council, August 11, 1728, Elmina, WIC 124, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 228–29.

33. Director-General H. Haring, Fiscal Frederick Hoevenaar and Councillors Engelgraaff, Robberts, and A. Snocck, Elmina, to Association of Ten, WIC, Amsterdam, August 15, 1712, WIC 101, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 168–69.

34. Resolution Director-General and Council, April 4, 1710, Elmina, WIC 124, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 154–56.

35. For example, in 1709 Sir Dalby Thomas, governor at Cape Coast Castle, stated that the "Fanteens," angry about English trade practices, "threaten to put a new king into Fetue." Sir Dalby Thomas, December 11, 1709, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

36. Elmina Journal NBKG 81, October 24, 1709, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 144.

37. Cape Coast Castle daybook, November–December 1765, T70/1022, PRO.

38. Letter from Bercoe, August 19, 1724, NBKG 82, Elmina Journal, Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

39. The RAC records note the following instance of a Borbor Fante man requesting the establishment of an English outpost in a town where he apparently had control of Atlantic trade: "Quanza who is the most potent in [Borbor] Fanteen has desired Sir Dalby to resettle at Tantumquerry and promises to make a good trade there." Sir Dalby Thomas, December 11, 1709, CCC, T70/5, PRO. Tantumquerry was near the Borbor Fante border with Agona.

40. Kea describes the basis of the elite's wealth. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 105.

41. John Kofi Fynn, "The Fante of Ghana 1600–1874," n.p., n.d.; Aja [Egya]: Anomabo Dispute, ADM 23/1/182, GNA-CC. Akwa is also mentioned in Henige, *Chronology of Oral Tradition*, 150. Akwa is described in European documents between 1708 and 1716 as caboceer, chief caboceer, and captain of Anomabo. Dutch records note "a Negro called Quaggio Aqua, the present Chief-caboceer of the Negrocroom of Annamaboe." Minutes of Director-General and Council, July 6, 1708, WIC 125, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 136–37.

42. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, 69–70.

43. A good example of this type of strategy is the relationship between the Dahomey Kingdom and Oyo from 1729 to 1818. Oyo established the right to collect revenue from Dahomey by military intimidation but allowed the king of Dahomey to otherwise govern his kingdom much as he did before the invasion.

44. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 61; Law, "Komenda Wars," 147; Law, *English in West Africa*, 3:334–35.

45. Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 180.

46. Ibid.

47. See for example Jan Vansina's description of a similar process in Equatorial Africa. *Paths in the Rainforests*, 104–19.

48. Sir Dalby Thomas, December 23, 1707, and William Hickes, December 23, 1707, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

49. RAC records noted in that year, "The Fanteens in their warrs are not likely to get the better of the Cabesteraes." Sir Dalby Thomas, March 23, 1710, CCC, T70/5, PRO.

50. See Miller, *Way of Death*, ch. 4.

51. Letter from Commany (Augier), October 21, 1726, NBKG 82, Elmina Journal, Documents, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

52. Boahen referred to this as the "Grand Alliance." "Fante Diplomacy," 40. See also Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante," 357.

53. NBKG 81, Elmina Journal, November 27, 1709, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 146–47.

54. Atkins, *Voyage to Guinea*, 97.

55. The Fante Coalition began to consolidate itself around 1724 and seemed to be established by circa 1752. See Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante," 356; and Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 36.

56. Atkins, *Voyage to Guinea*, 97.

57. Des Bordes to Assembly of Ten, September 17, 1738, Letters from the Guinea Coast, WIC 111, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 337–39.

58. McCarthy, *Growth of British Power*, 13.

59. For more on this system, see Jane I. Guyer, "Wealth in People: Wealth in Things," *Journal of African History* 36, no. 1 (1995): 83–140.

60. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 107.

61. For a discussion of this topic, see Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*, 16. There are important distinctions, of course, among European forms of warfare. See, for example, John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

62. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 101–4.

63. Fynn, "Fante of Ghana," 42–43.

64. Director-General and Council, April 8, 1717, Elmina, WIC 124, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 189–93.

65. Ibid. Daaku, "John Konny"; Henige, "John Kabes."

66. On Birempong Kodwo, see Deffontaine, "Pouvoir monarchique"; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 29–33; and Priestley, *West African Trade*, 15–16, 19–22, 121, 140n2.

67. Gore, Phipps, and Bleau, June 7, 1716, CCC, T70/6, PRO.

68. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 108.

69. Fynn, "Political System."

70. For example, in 1772 a "Body of Fantees" was reportedly "lying in wait to intercept such Ashantee Traders as may come down to Accra." Meeting of Council, August 11, 1772, CCC, T70/152, PRO.

71. Anomabo Fort daybook, July–October 1753, T70/985, PRO.

72. See, for example, Anomabo Fort Day Book, July and August 1753 and January 10 to March 21, 1753, PRO T70/985; and Anomabo Fort Day Book, January to December 1794, PRO T70/993.

73. Lentz and Nugent, *Ethnicity in Ghana*, 18–19.

74. David Henige, "Abrem Stool: A Contribution to the History and Historiography of Southern Ghana," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1973): 1–18; Henige, "Akan Stool Succession under Colonial Rule: Continuity or Change?" *Journal of African History* 16, no. 2 (1975): 285–301.

75. Henige, "Akan Stool Succession," 300.

76. See, for example, Tenkorang, "Importance of Firearms," 15. Tenkorang argues that it was impossible to limit the area of combat in this period because of the extensive alliances that brought neighboring states into wars. This is a classic instance of Horton's concept of the relativity of political organization. Horton, "Stateless Societies in West Africa," in Ajayi and Crowder, *History of West Africa*, 78–119.

77. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, ch. 4, 109.

78. Ibid., 132.

79. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 104 (emphasis added).

80. Previous scholarship has largely focused on the flags and symbols that asafo companies apparently adopted from the European military outposts on the Gold Coast. These European elements of asafo companies led some to argue that Europeans introduced the essential features of asafo companies to southern Ghana. A contrary view insists on the indigenous roots of asafo companies but largely ignores the importance of the growth of the slave trade and the political transformation on the coast in the early 1700s as an aspect of asafo history. Kwame Arhin suggests a connection between asafo origins and the slave trade but maintains a focus on wealth and commerce. He states that asafo companies came about as a result of wealthy merchants' need to surround themselves with groups of armed men to protect their

business interests during the slave trade. "Diffuse Authority," 68. Asafo historiography is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

81. Minutes of the Council Meetings, Elmina, April 4, 1710, WIC 124, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 154–56.

82. NBKG 105, Elmina Journal, July 30, 1741, and Chief Merchant Barovius to Assembly of Ten, Letters from the Guinea Coast, April 30, 1740, WIC 111," in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 354, 347–49; R. Stockwell et al. [to James Fort, Accra], October 7, 1749, CCC, T70/1515, PRO; John Roberts to [?], [April?] 5, 1751, CCC, T70/1477, PRO; Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 111, 170.

83. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 172, 173.

84. Governor and Council to Committee, 1778, part 1, T70/1536, PRO; Extract of Letter from John Roberts to Henry Saschelles, February 4, 1749, T70/1515, PRO. Occasionally, caravans from Asante did reach the central Gold Coast, but they did so at a high risk of attack and plunder by Coastal Coalition forces.

85. Governor and Council to Committee, 1778, part 1, T70/1536; Tenkorang, "Importance of Firearms."

86. Director-General J. P. T. Huydecooper, October 15, 1764, Elmina, WIC 115, as quoted in Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 86.

87. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 172. Elmina Journal NBKG 106, April 23, 1742, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 356.

88. Maier, "Military Acquisition," 120. See also Kouame, "L'hegemonie."

89. Tenkorang, "Importance of Firearms"; Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 126.

90. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 96–97.

91. Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, map 3. A major trade route passed through Twifo, near the Pra River. The exact locations of the eighteenth-century slave markets on this route have not been identified.

92. Copy of a letter from Wm. Mutter Esq., Governor of CCC, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, May 27, 1764, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

93. On Assin Manso, see Perbi, *History of Indigenous Slavery*, map 3, pp. xx, 41; Nana Kwame Nkyi XII, Chief of Assin Manso, Assin Apimanim Traditional Area 5, interview by Shumway, November 5, 2000. This town has developed into a site for heritage tourism in recent years. See Katrina Browne, *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 2008).

94. Meeting of Council, February 1, 1788, CCC, T70/153, PRO, fols. 98–99.

95. T70/993, PRO; T70/1265, PRO; T70/1567, PRO.

96. Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1640* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

97. Melvil to Committee, March 14, 1753, Cape Coast Castle, T70/30, PRO.

98. Isert, *Letters on West Africa*, 173.

99. Cape Coast Castle daybook, November–December 1765, T70/1022, PRO.

100. "Fantee Treaty for Excluding the French from Making Any Settlement in the Fantee Territories," February 6, 1753, Cape Coast, T70/1695, PRO.

101. Cape Coast Castle daybook, September–October 1766, T70/1024, PRO.

102. Ibid.

103. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, 91–120.

104. On the Asante ambassador, see Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch*, 31–90. On the Yovogan of Dahomey, see Law, *Ouidah*, 43, 57.

105. See Metcalf, "Trade Ounce."

106. Torrane to Committee, June 12, 1807, CCC, T70/35, PRO, in Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 6–7.

107. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*, 31–32, 153.

108. See, for example, McCaskie, *State and Society*, 75–77, 85.

109. For comparative analysis from the Slave Coast, see Law, *Slave Coast*, 114–15, 155. I would also like to thank Robin Law for sharing his thoughts on ritual oaths with me.

110. Phillips, "Journal of a Voyage," 224–25; Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 58–62; Hutton, *Voyage to Africa*, 88–89.

111. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 59–60. John Phillips noted in the 1690s, "On the gold coast when they make any solemn promise or oath, they take about six spoonfuls of water mix'd with some powders of divers colours, which the Fatishman puts into it; which potion is to kill them the very minute that they break or violate the oath or promise they took it on, and which they firmly believe." "Journal of a Voyage," 224.

112. Fynn, *Oral Traditions*, 3:iin1.

113. On the historical uses of alcohol in Ghana, see Akyeampong, *Cultural Change*.

114. David Mill to Committee, June 26, 1772, CCC, T70/31, PRO.

115. Anomabo Fort daybook, January–February 1754, T70/985, PRO; Richard Miles, January 22, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO; ADM 1/2/417, GNA-A.

116. Richard Miles, January 22, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

117. David Mill, October 19, 1776, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

118. John Roberts, CCC, to [?], 1751, T70/1477, PRO.

119. Captain Peter Holt, Charles Fort Annamaboe, to RAC, June 20, 1715, T70/3, PRO.

120. Richard Miles, January 22, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Melvil to Committee, June 11, 1752, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

125. Thomas Melvil, July 11, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

126. John Roberts to [?], [April?] 5, 1751, CCC, T70/1477, PRO. Emphasis added.

127. Thomas Melvil, September 15, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

128. Governor [Roberts] and Council [Beard, Feilde], October 31, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

129. Thomas Melvil, July 23, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

130. William Mutter to Committee, October 15, 1760, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

131. Ibid.

132. Eighteenth-century sources do mention priestesses. See, for example, Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 95. See also John Beecham, *Ashantee and the Gold Coast: Being a Sketch of the History, Social State, and Superstitions of the Inhabitants of Those Countries, with a Notice of the State and Prospects of Christianity among Them* (1841; repr., London: Dawsons, 1968), 188–89; and Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 41, 124, 304–5.

133. Sandra E. Greene, "Family Concerns: Gender and Ethnicity in Pre-Colonial West Africa," *International Review of Social History* 44 (1999): 15; Emmanuel Akyeampong and Pashington Obeng, "Spirituality, Gender, and Power in Asante History,"

International Journal of African Historical Studies 28, no. 3 (1995): 481–508; Greene, *Social Change*. E. Brown describes an important priestess in Borbor Fante traditions. *Asianti Reader*, 1:57.

134. The full text of this treaty is reprinted in Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 42–43.

135. Anomabo Fort daybook, September–October 1753, T70/985, PRO.

136. See Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 98; Law, *English in West Africa*, 1:xvii.

137. Cape Coast Castle daybook, November–December 1765, T70/1022, PRO.

138. Mutter, Petrie, and Grossle, CCC, to Committee, July 10, 1765, T70/31, PRO; Tenkorang, "Importance of Firearms"; Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbors*; Margaret Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British: Eighteenth-Century Origins," *Journal of African History* 2, no. 1 (1961): 35–59.

139. The men were each given four gallons of rum, except "Cudjoe" (Brempong Kwadwo), the company's highest paid African employee and resident of Cape Coast, who received eight gallons of rum. Cape Coast Castle daybook, November–December 1765, T70/1022, PRO.

140. Anomabo Fort daybook, January–December 1794, T70/993, PRO. In 1794 France's Compagnie du Sénégal was actively trying to stake a claim on Gold Coast ground.

141. Complaint against Thomas Miles, Esq., Governor of Annamaboe Fort (1791–92), Abstract of Evidence: Martin Watts, BT6/69, PRO.

142. Cape Coast Castle daybook, January–February 1764, T70/1021, PRO.

143. The term *panyin* means an "elder" or a "senior person" in both the Asante and Fante languages. Paul A. Kotey, *Twi-English/English-Twi Dictionary* (New York: Hippocrene, 1998); Jack Berry, *English, Twi, Asante, Fante Dictionary* (Accra, Ghana: Presbyterian Book Depot, 1960).

144. Abstract of Evidence, BT6/69, PRO.

145. Dalzel to Gordon, June 29, 1795, CCC, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A.

146. Complaint against Thomas Miles, BT6/69, PRO.

147. Cape Coast Castle daybook, July–August 1766, T70/1024, PRO.

148. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 109–11.

149. David Mill to Members of Council, May 22, 1776, CCC, T70/1534, PRO.

150. Anomabo Fort daybook, April 1–June 30, 1792, T70/993, PRO.

151. This tradition was recorded by Henry Meredith following the Asante invasion of Fanteland in 1807. *Account*, 116–17. For an important consideration of the ways texts such as Meredith's have influenced Fante oral traditions, see David Henige, "The Problem of Feedback in Oral Tradition: Four Examples from the Fante Coastlands," *Journal of African History* 14, no. 2 (1973): 223–35.

152. Bosman, *Accurate Description*, 57; Van Dantzig, "English Bosman," 210–11.

153. Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea*, 1:347, 381, 391, 396, 606.

154. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 127.

155. "Fantee Treaty," T70/1695, PRO.

156. Ogilvee to R. Miles, February 20, 1779, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A; Cape Coast Castle daybook, January–February 1764, T70/1021, PRO.

157. William Feilde, August 6, 1791, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

158. McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim," 135–39. See also Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea*, 1:388n32.

159. T70/1021, 1022, 1024, 1026, PRO.

160. Orders and Instructions to Governor and Council at CCC from the Committee, November 10, 1779, London, T70/162, PRO. See also Richard Miles, April 25, 1777, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

161. For example, Samuel Ellis stated that Amonu Kuma was "usually styled principal Cabbocier or King and had no doubt very great weight amongst the People." Martin Watts similarly reported "that Amooney Coomah is the acknowledged king of the Fantee Country by the natives and has great power. That he is considered the head man in the town of Annamaboe. And has a command of the Annamaboe people. . . . Has great power and influence over the natives in the country being chosen by them for that purpose." Complaint against Thomas Miles, BT6/69, PRO.

162. Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

163. Richard Miles to Commanders of the British Shipping, November 24, 1775, Anomabo Fort, T70/1534, PRO.

164. David Mill, December 30, 1775, and Governor [R. Miles] and Council, September 25, 1778, CCC, T70/1534, PRO.

165. Governor [R. Miles] and Council, September 25, 1778, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

166. Ibid.

167. Complaint against Thomas Miles, BT6/69, PRO.

168. Charles Squire to Dalzel, May 24, 1793, Anomabo Fort, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A.

169. The term *captain* was also used in nonmilitary contexts, particularly in the seventeenth century in reference to Akani merchant captains. In that context, Kea translates the term to mean a merchant-broker. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 251–52, 266–85.

170. Cape Coast Castle daybook, March–April 1764, T70/1021, PRO; T70/993, PRO.

171. Anomabo Fort daybook, July–August 1753, T70/985, PRO.

172. For example, "David Mill, October 19, 1776, CCC, T70/32, PRO; Cape Coast Castle daybook, March–April 1767, T70/1025, PRO; Cape Coast Castle daybook, July–August 1765, and Cape Coast Castle daybook, May–June 1765, T70/1022, PRO.

173. Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO.

174. William Moar to Richard Miles, January 8, 1777, Cape Coast Road, T70/1534, PRO.

175. Archibald Dalzel, February 28, 1793, CCC, T70/1576, PRO.

176. Ibid.

177. William Mutter to Committee, October 15, 1760, CCC, Adm. 1/3810, PRO.

178. Christensen, *Double Descent*; Chukwukere, *Cultural Resilience*; Ansu K. Datta and R. Porter, "The 'Asafo' System in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 12, no. 2 (1971): 279–97; J. C. De Graft Johnson, "The Fanti Asafu," *Africa* 5, no. 3 (1932): 307–22; Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*; Arthur Ffoulkes, "The Company System in Cape Coast Castle," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 7 (1908): 262–77; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*; Hagan, "Fanti Kinship"; Hagan, *Divided We Stand*; Per O. Hernæs, "Asafo History: An Introduction," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 2 (1998): 1–5; Parker, *Making the Town*; Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*. Kea provides an analysis of military titles in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 130–68.

179. Brodie Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, Including an Account of the Native Tribes, and Their Intercourse with Europeans*, 2 vols. (1853; repr., London: Cass, 1966), 1:245.

180. Datta and Porter, "'Asafo' System."

181. Gazetteers (Oral Tradition), 1947, ADM 23/1/1235, GNA-CC.

182. The work of Kwame Arhin, in particular, misleadingly suggests that military titles and political offices have been joined in Akan societies since the eighteenth century. "Asante Military Institutions," esp. pp. 23–24, 27. Arhin argues that "the status of Asante chiefs was assigned on the basis of their position in the Asante army," including divisions for the army's main body, right wing, left wing, and rear guard. He concludes that "in Asante political organization was given in the military organization and vice versa" (24). However, there is no evidence of such overlap in military and political positions in the coastal region prior to the nineteenth century. Therefore, Arhin's emphasis on the similarities of Akan military forms reinforces the false notion that all Akan-speaking people share a history of militarized state building. It is interesting to note that colonial-era observers emphasize the *lack* of cooperation between asafo companies and political leaders in coastal towns and repeatedly note the asafo's propensity to engage in spontaneous and erratic fighting with one another. See Hernæs, "Asafo History."

183. Aja [Egya]: Anomabo Dispute, ADM 23/1/182, GNA-A.

184. Richard Brew to Richard Miles, February 22, 1776, Castle Brew, T70/1534, PRO.

185. T. Cle to [Council?], March 11, 1794, CCC, T70/1567, PRO.

186. Biddall to Dalzel, September 11, 1792, Anomabo Fort, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A; Abstract of Evidence, BT6/69, PRO; Archibald Dalzel, January 20, 1793, CCC, T70/33, PRO; Anomabo Fort daybook, January–December 1794, T70/993, PRO; Richard Miles, "Slave Barters at Annamaboe, 1776–77," T70/1265, PRO; Dalzel and Gordon, January 12, 1793, Anomabo Fort, T70/1567, PRO.

187. Metcalf, "Trade Ounce."

188. Richard Brew to Richard Miles, February 22, 1776, Castle Brew, T70/1534, PRO.

189. Ibid.

190. Dalzel to Biddal, September 11, 1792, CCC, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A; Archibald Dalzel, September 27, 1792, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

191. Archibald Dalzel, January 20, 1793, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

192. Ibid. Dalzel and Gordon, January 12, 1793, Anomabo Fort, T70/1567, PRO.

193. The exception was the shrine of Nananom Mpow in the second half of the eighteenth century.

194. Another term for priests and priestesses is *abosomfuo*. *Obosom* means deity (pl. *abosom*).

195. Barbot, *Barbot on Guinea*, 1:299.

196. Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 124.

197. Axim correspondence April 18, 1741, in Van Dantzig, *Guinea Coast*, 354–55.

198. Beecham, *Ashantee*, 188–89.

199. Tom C. McCaskie, "Komfo Anokye of Asante: Meaning, History and Philosophy in an African Society," *Journal of African History* 27, no. 2 (1986): 315–39.

200. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 98.

201. Meredith, *Account*, 115.

202. Cape Coast Castle daybook, September–October 1766, T70/1024, PRO.

Chapter 4

1. For a comparative example of this process on the eastern Gold Coast, see Greene, *Social Change*, 12–15. See also the emergence of ethnic identity in the context of the slave trade among the Efik of Old Calabar, in Lovejoy and Richardson, "Trust" and "Anglo-Efik Relations."

2. Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns," 41–43; Christensen, *Double Descent*, 7–12; Great Britain, Parliament, "Select Committee," 200.

3. Portuguese traders held the first Catholic Mass in the region in 1482, but the conversion of Africans to Christianity was minimal prior to the 1830s. Islamic conversion was widespread in the northern regions of modern-day Ghana well before the nineteenth century, but few Muslims inhabited the coastal region prior to the period of British colonial rule.

4. For an analysis of the changing uses of the term, see David Murray, "Object Lessions: Fetishism and the Hierarchies of Race and Religion," in *Conversion: Old Worlds and New*, ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 199–217.

5. Deffontaine, *Guerre et société*, 9; Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, 31–34.

6. On the historical significance of sacred groves in southern Ghana, see Chouin, "Sacred Groves."

7. Ibid., 183. Nananom Mpow is an example of the particular type of sacred grove that marked ancient settlements and the burial places of important ancestors across southern Ghana. Chouin, "Sacred Groves," 185–88.

8. Shumway, "Fante Shrine of Nananom Mpow." IJAHS 44:1 (2011). Borbor Fante migration is discussed in chapter 1. On how sacred groves are created, see Chouin, "Archaeological Perspectives."

9. Fynn, *Oral Traditions*; Christensen, *Double Descent*, 12–18; McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim"; Nana Baa VII, Ohin of Nankesedo (Lower Saltpond) and Nyimfahene of Nkusukum Traditional Area, Saltpond, interview by Shumway, November 16 and 24, 2000; Nana Amonu XI, interview, January 6, 2001.

10. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 38–39.

11. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 95.

12. Rebecca Shumway, "The Fante Shrine of Nananom Mpow and the Atlantic Slave Trade in Southern Ghana," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.

13. Two of the most prolific writers about the Gold Coast in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Pieter de Marees and Willem Bosman, did not attribute any particular significance to shrines or priests in the Mankessim area. Bosman, *Accurate Description*; Pieter De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea*, trans. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (1602; repr., New York: Oxford, 1987).

14. Rømer was told about the oracle at Nananom Mpow by numerous Africans, including "Bassi," the son of Eno Baisie Kurentsi who had lived in France for several years. Rømer states that Bassi had personally visited Nananom Mpow and sacrificed a goat to it in gratitude for his safe return from France. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 95–96.

15. Ibid., 78–79, 95–98, 266.

16. PRO T70/29, "Thomas Melvil, CCC, 23 July 1751."

17. Meredith confused the town of Abura for Mankessim, neither of which he had visited personally. Meredith's error was later reiterated by John Beecham (1841). McCaskie speculates that Abura was taken to be the Fante capitol because of its role in coastal politics after the Asante invasion of 1807. McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim," 149n62.

18. Meredith, *Account*, 115–16.

19. Beecham, *Ashantee*, 178. Beecham was not an eyewitness but studied and compiled notes from published accounts, including those of Bowdich, Dupuis, Meredith, Bosman, and Isert. He was a Wesleyan Methodist and had access to the records of that society's activities in West Africa (See introduction by G. E. Metcalfe).

20. See note 17 regarding the misuse of the name "Abrah" (Abura) in association with Mankessim and Nananom Mpow.

21. Beecham, *Ashantee*, 201 (emphasis added).

22. Fynn, *Oral Traditions*, 3:38, 78.

23. Fynn, *Oral Traditions*, 5:63.

24. Nananom Mpow was defamed by a former *okomfo*, who converted to Christianity in 1851. McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim," 145–46; John Brandford Crayner, *Akweesi and the Fall of Nananom Pow* (Accra, Ghana: Methodist Book Depot, 1979), 30–33.

25. Rømer, *Reliable Account*, 97–98.

26. Beecham, *Ashantee*, 188–89. Many priests and priestesses were on the Gold Coast, especially those associated with "public fetish houses or temples"; for example, there were more than fifty at the Ahanta fetish.

27. For example, Anomabo Fort daybook, March–April 1754, T70/985, PRO.

28. Meredith, *Account*, 115.

29. Beecham, *Ashantee*, 196.

30. For example, the Ayeye festival is "celebrated by the *Asafo* to remember the time their ancestors came to settle at where they are now. This is done every year in the month of August. . . . The gods and the fetish priest all take part in it." Nana Prapaku and Kow Sam, Asafo History Programme Field Interviews, 1997, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

31. Gilbert Petrie, October 21, 1768, CCC, T70/31, PRO.

32. The British slave-trading company—known as the Royal African Company before 1750 and the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa thereafter—attempted, with little success, to monopolize the coastal ports between Cape Coast and Accra throughout the eighteenth century.

33. Crooks, *Gold Coast Settlements*, 10–20; Isaac Ephson, *Ancient Forts and Castles of the Gold Coast (Ghana)* (Accra: Ghana Institute of Art and Culture, 1970), 38–39; Sanders, "Expansion of the Fante," 357–59.

34. Thomas Melvil, July 23, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

35. Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 2:526–28.

36. Thomas Melvil, July 23, 1751, CCC, T70/29, PRO.

37. Meeting of Council, August 17, 1786, CCC, T70/153, PRO, fol. 48.

38. Ibid.

39. See, for example, Cape Coast Castle daybooks, March 3, 1766, T70/1024, PRO.

40. T70/1024, PRO. "Murram" was a common spelling in English records for the town known in Fante as Mankessim. See the 1746 navigational chart reproduced in Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 29.

41. See especially Baum, *Shrines*; Suzanne Preston Blier, *African Vodun: Art, Psychology, and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade*; Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); John M. Janzen, *Lemba, 1650–1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World* (New York: Garland, 1982).

42. Allman and Parker, *Tongnaab*, ch. 1. Another example from Ghana is the 1922 cult of Hwemisu. "Fetishes," ADM 23/1/213, GNA-CC.

43. Greene, *Social Change*; Greene, "Cultural Zones in the Era of the Slave Trade: Exploring the Yoruba Connection with the Anlo-Ewe," in Lovejoy, *Shadow of Slavery*, 86–101; Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter: A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

44. Greene, *Sacred Sites*, 17.

45. Baum, *Shrines*, 117–27.

46. Shaw, *Memories*, 51.

47. Other examples from West and West Central Africa further illustrate the importance of shrines in mediating the impact of, and responses to, the slave trade. See, for example, Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen* and "The Political Economy of the Angolan Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century," *Indian Historical Review* 15, no. 1–2 (1988–89): 152–87; Edmund Ilogu, "Changing Religious Beliefs in Nigeria," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 117 (1975): 3; and Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *Igbo Worlds: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Descriptions* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978).

48. Thomas Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* (1819; repr., London: Cass, 1966), 263n.

49. John Kofi Fynn, "The Nananom Pow of the Fante: Myth and Reality," *Sankofa* 2 (1976): 54–59; Fynn, "Political System"; McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim"; Crayner, *Fall of Nananom Pow*; Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy."

50. Boahen, "Fante Diplomacy," 27; McCaskie, "Nananom Mpow of Mankessim," 145, 147.

51. The importance of asafo companies in the evolution of Fante kinship patterns was first suggested by Christensen, *Double Descent*, ch. 5.

52. Peter Alder and Nicholas Barnard, *Asafo! African Flags of the Fante* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); Chukwukere, *Cultural Resilience*; Kwame Amoah Labi, "Fights, Riots, and Disturbances with 'Objectionable and Provocative Art' among the Fante *Asafo* Companies," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 2 (1998): 101–16; Doran H. Ross, *Fighting with Art: Appliquéd Flags of the Fante Asafo* (Los Angeles: UCLA Museum of Cultural History, 1979).

53. Doran H. Ross, "'Come and Try': Towards a History of Fante Military Shrines," *African Arts*, Autumn (2007): 12–35. Asafo company shrines have evolved into large concrete structures, known as "posuban," which literally means "postfortification" or "fort building." Originally, they were simple mounds that served as meeting places.

See Christensen, *Double Descent*, 112. Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 are examples of contemporary asafo company shrines.

54. Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years*, 1:245.

55. De Graft Johnson, "Fanti Asafu," 307.

56. This project is described in Hernæs, "Asafo History."

57. Ross, *Fighting with Art* and "Come and Try"; Kay Heymer et al., *Tanzende bilder: Fahnen der Fante asafo in Ghana* (Bonn, Germany: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1993); J. H. Kwabena Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana* (Edinburgh: University of Ghana / Nelson, 1963); Alder and Barnard, *Asafo!*

58. De Graft Johnson, "Fanti Asafu," 307.

59. For a discussion of the greater prevalence of asafo companies on the coast than in the interior, see "The Company System in the Gold Coast, January 17, 1931," ADM 11/1/1439; and Nana Tibu Asare II, Chief of Nyankumasi Ahenkro, Assin Atandanso Traditional Area, interview by Shumway, November 8, 2000.

60. See, for example, Gordon to Dalzel, July 1, 1795, Anomabo Fort, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A; Ashanti Treaty of Peace, April 27, 1831, ADM 23/1/113, GNA-CC; Grosvenor, Phipps, and Bleau, October 6, 1713, CCC, T70/5, PRO; John Errington, March 13, 1715, CCC, T70/6, PRO; Governor [Roberts] and Council, December 24, 1780, CCC, T70/32, PRO; William Feilde, April 18, 1791, CCC, T70/33, PRO.

61. Another form of asafo companies existed prior to the eighteenth century in the larger towns such as Elmina and Cape Coast. See Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans*, 104–5; Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Polities*, 132–46, 164–68; and Datta and Porter, "'Asafo' System," 287–88.

62. Fynn, *Oral Traditions*; "Anomabo: Obaatan Epiram and Epiram and Okyeame Ackom," "Anomabo: Kwame Quaye," "Anomabo: Kwasi Nana Sagoe," "Saltpond: Kow Duku," "Saltpond: Nana Prapaku," "Saltpond: Kwasi Kuma," "Saltpond: Kow Sam," "Saltpond: Safohen Annam," "Odoben," and "Mumford: Opanyin Abbiw," Asafo History Programme Field Interviews, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

63. See William Ernest Frank Ward, *A History of Ghana* (London: Praeger, 1958), chs. 8–12.

64. De Graft Johnson, "Fanti Asafu," 308.

65. Ffoulkes, "Company System."

66. De Graft Johnson, "Fanti Asafu," 317.

67. Ibid., 319.

68. Compare, for example, Blier, *African Vodun*, and Shaw, *Memories*.

69. Efua Fenua, interview.

70. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 56–57.

71. Ross, *Fighting with Art*; Hernæs, "Asafo History"; Godwin Kwafo Adjei, "Asafo Music of the Fantes: A Study of the History, Development and Form of Asafo Music of Cape Coast and Elmina" (master's thesis, University of Ghana, 2000).

72. Hagan, "Fanti Kinship," 56; Christensen, *Double Descent*, 107–26.

73. Each company had a number of priests attached to it, who interpreted and protected deities, or *abusum*, associated with the company. The company would normally sacrifice a sheep or goat to the asafo abusum before heading into war to

acknowledge and appeal to the spirits of the ancestral heroes of the company. De Graft Johnson, "Fanti Asafu," 320–21; Adjei, "Asafo Music," 37–38.

74. As Meyer Fortes explains, in the lifetime of every man and woman there is a point of transition from "jural infancy" to "jural adulthood," usually the point at which the young person leaves the parents' home. This transition marks the end of the youth's belonging solely to the domestic group and the beginning of membership in the politico-jural domain, where he or she joins the society at large. The domestic and politico-jural domains are complementary and interdependent, although they are also inherently in conflict of sorts since the former has "lost" a member. Every person continues to belong to both a domestic group and the politico-jural domain. In a matrilineal society, a father and son have a domestic relationship but not really a politico-jural one, whereas the boy and his mother's brother have a politico-jural relationship but not necessarily a domestic one. Introduction to *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups*, by Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 1–14. As social institutions, asafo companies were involved in this transition of young adults from domestic to politico-jural domains. In Fanteland this transition involved a young person's becoming a member of his or her father's asafo company, as well as a full member of the lineage group and chiefdom.

75. The political and social organization of African societies came to rely more extensively on slavery in areas of agricultural production, military recruitment, and external trade: "where slaves had once been an incidental element in society, they now became common." Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 46.

76. Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, 7 (emphasis added).

77. See, for instance, Priestley, *West African Trade*, 18–19; Datta and Porter, "'Asafo' System," 294–96; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, 33–34; Hagan, *Divided We Stand*, ch. 8; Ephirim-Donkor, *African King*, 32–41; Gérard Chouin, "Tentation patrilinéire, guerre et conflits lignagers en milieu Akan: Une contribution á l'histoire de la transmission du pouvoir royal en Eguafo (xvii–xxème siècles)," in Valsecchi and Viti, *Akan Worlds*. See also Helen Diana Hornsey, "Religion in a Fante Town of Southern Ghana" (PhD diss., University of London, 1979).

78. As J. C. de Graft Johnson explained, "Membership in the asafu is by birth or adoption—every child nominally belongs to its father's Asafu, in the same way as it belongs to its mother's Ebusua." "Fanti Asafu," 312.

79. Pierluigi Valsecchi, "The 'True Nzema': A Layered Identity," *Africa* 71, no. 3 (2001): 413–14.

80. For a review of the literature, see Datta and Porter, "'Asafo' System."

81. Roger Gocking, "The Historic Akoto: A Social History of Cape Coast Ghana, 1843–1948" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1981), 46–55.

82. See Emmanuel Abaka, "Standard Fante"; Dolphyne, "Akan Language Patterns."

83. Thompson, *Two Missionary Voyages*, 70.

84. Deey to Bullen, March 6, 1798, Anomabo Fort, ADM 1/2/418, GNA-A.

85. Great Britain. Parliament. "Select Committee," 200.

86. Arthur Ffoulkes, District Commissioner, "The Company System of Cape Coast Castle," ADM 23/1/487, GNA-CC.

87. Greene, "Cultural Zones," 90; Law, *Slave Coast*, 23–26; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 90.

Conclusion

1. Traders nevertheless managed to transport approximately twenty-five thousand enslaved people to the Americas after 1807. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

2. On Asante in the nineteenth century, see McCaskie, *State and Society*; and Wilks, *Asante*.

3. This notion was introduced by Anthony G. Hopkins in "Economic Imperialism in West Africa," *Economic History Review* 21 (1968): 580–606. A more recent review of the idea is presented in Law, *"Legitimate" Commerce*.

4. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959).

5. Descriptions of timeless precolonial African societies were common in European and American scholarship of the early twentieth century, when the nascent study of anthropology tended to classify non-Western people into rigid categories. Melville J. Herskovits is the scholar most often associated with this problem.

The notion of unchanging precolonial African societies has been unintentionally reinvigorated by the growth of African diaspora studies, as scholars seek to identify the ethnic and cultural counterparts of African-descended American groups on the African continent—a task that poses enormous research challenges apart from the matter of changes in African cultures and ethnicities over time. Nevertheless, as Paul Lovejoy has argued, to accurately trace links between ethnic identities in Africa and in the Americas, scholars must "look at the categories of ethnic and linguistic identification and relate these categories to their historical context." "Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade and the Reconstruction of the History of Trans-Atlantic Slavery," in Lovejoy and Trotman, *Dimensions of Ethnicity*, 9–42. Innovative work on Yoruba identities on both sides of the Atlantic is beginning to show the potential for this kind of research. See especially Falola and Childs, *Yoruba Diaspora*.

The tendency among historians to separate the precolonial from the colonial and postcolonial periods in Africa's history—and to ignore continuities in processes of political and cultural change from the precolonial era into later periods—has been described by John Parker, who offers a new interpretation of the history of Accra. *Making the Town*, xviii–xix. Another important recent example of bridging this gap in West African history is Mann, *Slavery*.

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The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
Rebecca Shumway

The history of Ghana attracts popular interest out of proportion to its small size and marginal importance to the global economy. Ghana is the land of Kwame Nkrumah and the Pan-Africanist movement of the 1960s; it has been a temporary home to famous African Americans like W. E. B. DuBois and Maya Angelou; and its Asante Kingdom and signature kente cloth—global symbols of African culture and pride—are well known. Ghana also attracts a continuous flow of international tourists because of two historical sites that are among the most notorious monuments of the transatlantic slave trade: Cape Coast and Elmina Castles. These looming structures are a vivid reminder of the horrific trade that gave birth to the black population of the Americas.

The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade explores the fascinating history of the transatlantic slave trade on Ghana's coast between 1700 and 1807. Here author Rebecca Shumway brings to life the survival experiences of southern Ghanaians as they became both victims of continuous violence and successful brokers of enslaved human beings. The era of the slave trade gave birth to a new culture in this part of West Africa, just as it was giving birth to new cultures across the Americas. *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* pushes Asante scholarship to the forefront of African diaspora and Atlantic World studies by showing the integral role of Fante middlemen and transatlantic trade in the development of the Asante economy prior to 1807.

Rebecca Shumway is assistant professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh.

"Indisputably a significant topic, solidly and comprehensively treated, effectively situated within the existing historiography, and offering new material which advances understanding of the topics dealt with."

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